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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

HENRY III AND THE LEAGUE, 1585-1589

by

Ⓒ SHARILYN J. INGRAM

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Henry III and the League, 1585-1589" submitted by Sharilyn Jane Ingram in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

An examination of the role of Henry III in his conflict with the League is essential to an appreciation of the complex political situation during this penultimate phase of the wars of religion in France. As a result of the highly personalized nature of royal power in the sixteenth century, the monarchy's survival against the dual challenges of religious diversity and aristocratic insurgency depended chiefly upon the conduct of the talented but unstable Valois king.

The Prologue of this paper reviews the immediate historical background to the struggle of the 1580's, with emphasis on the League of Peronne in 1576 and the ultra-catholic resurgence in 1584 provoked by a threatened calvinist succession. Chapter I traces Henry III's conduct during the first serious outbreak of hostilities, when his ambivalent attitude toward the ultra-catholics and his inability to translate political insight into practical measures resulted in the Treaty of Nemours. The implications of this surrender to the League and Henry's subsequent attempts to avoid fulfilling the commitments of Nemours are discussed in Chapter II, culminating in the defeat of royal strategy both on the battlefield and in Paris, where a League-inspired popular uprising drove Henry from the city in 1588. Chapter III outlines both the royal capitulation to the League expressed in the Edict of Union and Henry's desperate attempts to reverse this trend at the Estates General, the failure of which precipitated his assassination of the duke of Guise and attendant irreparable break with the ultracatholics. The Epilogue examines the assassination's aftermath in which the king was driven into an unexpectedly advantageous alliance with the calvinists that was terminated only by Henry's own assassination.

In conclusion, a study of Henry's conduct results in a greater appreciation of the monarch's political abilities than has been usual; however, his accomplishment in preserving the heritability of the French crown is outweighed by his general mishandling of the conflict with the League. As a king, Henry III must be adjudged an interesting failure.

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PROLOGUE

It was no easy task to be king of France in the late sixteenth century. Throughout the morass which history has named the French Religious Wars the twin themes of conflicting religions and conflicting aristocratic factions were entangled in an apparently endless period of chaos, through which the monarchy seemed able to do little more than stumble from crisis to crisis. By the time of Henry III, last of the Valois dynasty, the political kaleidoscope had swirled into an ironic pattern in which the catholic monarchy faced its greatest challenge not from calvinists but from co-religionists who should have been the king's strongest supporters. Ultimately, in his conflict with the catholic League, Henry was to prove no more able than his predecessors to control events, but the mere survival of the monarchy during the turbulent 1580's must represent an accomplishment of some magnitude.

The nominal cause of the disorders which tore France asunder for decades was the existence of a non-catholic population that came to be known as the huguenots. From a moderate reformist movement originally on the fringes of the catholic church, French protestantism fell under the decisive influence of Jean Calvin, to emerge as a rigidly defined creed equipped with an organization peculiarly suited to a small group's survival within a hostile environment. At first the new religion had spread chiefly among the professional and trading classes, but when it began to make significant inroads into the lesser nobility it gained immeasurable strength, for the addition of military might to an efficient organization transformed the huguenots from a potential nuisance into a probable threat to the stability of the French state.[1]

Unfortunately for France and her king, religious conflicts became enmeshed in the dynastic rivalries of the country's aristocratic factions. The Bourbons were the princes of the blood, who could aspire to the throne should the Valois line die out; generally, most became calvinists, and their family lands in the south-west of the kingdom were seen as the stronghold of the reformed religion. Roman catholicism found its French champion in the house of Guise--cadet branch of the Lorraine family, whose driving ambition had catapulted its members in two generations from the position of half-foreign upstarts to status among the greatest nobles in France. Identification of the Guises with intolerant ultra-catholicism had arisen from the fact that throughout the middle decades of the century one of the family's most prominent members was also the most powerful prelate in France, and thus much of the house's wealth rested upon association with the established church. Of the factions, it was the Guises who constituted the dynamic element, their sudden pre-eminence fostering jealousy and discord among the Bourbons and other noble houses. Once religious conflicts were added to the maelstrom of incessant rivalries, the subsequent strife was such that only a strong central authority could impose a rough equilibrium upon the warring factions.

Through the luck of a splintered lance, suddenly this strong figure was removed in 1559, when Henry II died accidentally in a tournament. He was succeeded by his fifteen-year old son, Francis II, whose seventeen-month reign was dominated by the Guise uncles of his wife, Mary Queen of Scots. Upon Francis' death, the crown passed to his nine-year old brother, who took the name of Charles IX, but his reign was most notable for the emergence of his mother, Catherine de Medici, as the foremost figure on the French political scene. As a foreigner, a commoner, and a woman, the queen mother laboured under severe handicaps in her attempts to preserve the monarchy amidst warring aristocratic factions and conflicting religious groups. Aware of the crown's weakness during the reign of a child-king and perhaps over-estimating the strength of the huguenots, Catherine thought monarchical survival most assured not by permanent alliance with one faction or the other, but by playing them off one against the other. Although at no time did she indicate that the royal family might convert to calvinism (and indeed the value of the king's patronage in the church made this most unlikely), at intermittent periods she seemed favourable to official toleration of two religions within the state, thus strengthening the huguenot faction immeasurably. Unfortunately for the Valois family, this policy succeeded not in establishing a stable peace but in provoking an apparently endless series of wars, truces, factional realignments, and further wars; moreover, instead of establishing the monarchy as the dominant force throughout these interminable squabbles, Catherine succeeded only in making the crown distrusted on all sides--an impression perpetuated by her role in the infamous massacre of St. Bartholomew's day in 1572.[2]

Upon the death of Charles IX in 1574 it did not appear that the political pattern of the previous decade would undergo much change. The new king was Henry III, a young man only twenty-three years of age, currently serving as the elected king of Poland, and upon returning to his native land he gave little indication that he wished to wrest control of the government from his mother or disassociate himself from the policies she had been espousing. Indeed, his reign was soon marked by the alternation of war and truce that had prevailed since 1560; however, early in his rule one development, if not unprecedented, served as an ominous harbinger of the direction from which future threats to the monarchy were to evolve.

During the late 1560's, recognizing that the success of the huguenots was proportional to their organization rather than to their actual numbers, catholics in several communities had formed leagues which united them by oath in a common purpose; however, at that time the leagues remained local groups that generally were short-lived.[3] But in 1576 a catholic association was organized that gave promise of greater breadth and longevity than any of its predecessors. When a peace treaty marking yet another phase of the apparently endless civil wars awarded the government of Picardy to the calvinist prince of Condé and further ceded him the town of Péronne as a personal stronghold, the catholics of that province declared the formation of a "holy and christian union" to prevent the area from falling into the heretics' hands.[4] Asking the king for his support in their endeavours "to maintain the town and the whole province in obedience to the king and observance of the catholic, apostolic, and Roman church," the signatories of the declaration also expected to be "assisted, supported, helped and comforted universally by all princes, prelates, and lords of this kingdom." Furthermore, they offered an implicit organization under the control of one leader (as yet unnamed), who would be advised by a network of agents intended to serve not only within France but also as a means of communication with "confederates in neighbouring nations." Thus, while protesting their dedication to the king's service, the allied catholics of Péronne had projected an association of international scope whose leader clearly was not meant to be Henry III.

It was soon obvious that this position was intended for the duke of Guise. The prime mover behind the ultra-catholic organization in Picardy was a member of Guise's faction, and the duke himself soon issued a proclamation[5] in which he urged that the "association of catholic princes, lords, and gentlemen" should swear "all prompt obedience and service to the leader who will be appointed," and that all who refused to join the League would be considered enemies punishable as such. The articles concluded with an oath for each member to swear "on pain of eternal damnation" that he would serve the "holy catholic association" to, if necessary, "the last drop of his blood."

At this point Henry III made one of his rare decisions. Recognizing both the potential strength of an organized catholic party and the danger to himself if this faction were to exist under other than royal command, he suddenly commended the concept of a catholic organization, declared himself leader of the new movement, and sent out instructions to all royal governors to promote the association.[6] The terms in which the king couched his directions made it obvious he wanted recruits for a catholic army who would be satisfied by service to their faith rather than wages out of royal coffers; thus, in one rather clever step, the king gained himself an army while simultaneously "labouring to avoid that blow, which he saw he could not break by making resistance."[7]

Henry's unexpected usurpation of the League of Péronne somewhat cooled Guise's enthusiasm for the catholic association, and the subsequent brief war with the huguenots resulted in a peace treaty only slightly less favourable to the calvinists than the previous peace which had provoked the catholic reaction in Picardy. This moderate royal success did not blind Henry to the dangers of an official catholic faction which could likely fall under Guise's influence, and the articles of the peace treaty in November 1577 included a provision that "all leagues, associations, and confraternities formed or to be formed under whatever pretext . . . are to be broken up and annulled."[8] As the king's momentary support waned, so did the League of Péronne, but the brief interval of royal favour had implanted the concept of a nation-wide catholic League which was later to be revived under determined ultra-catholic leadership with what proved to be catastrophic results for Henry III.

In 1574 Henry III had seemed a figure of considerable promise: he was physically attractive with a notably regal bearing; he was obviously intelligent and had shown himself a skilful orator; and he even enjoyed a military reputation (albeit undeserved) for his largely ceremonial role in the catholic victories of Jarnac and Moncontour in 1569. Unfortunately for France, these qualities were undermined by traits less desirable in a monarch.[9]

It soon became apparent to all that the king suffered from a general emotional instability. The extremes of his temperament sent him into fits of frantic activity which were followed by long periods of lethargy during which Henry had no interest in affairs of state but became instead an "absentee king."[10] Moreover, even his active phases were spent increasingly in pastimes that were considered most unbefitting his royal dignity. Henry's general indolence and taste for a "soft and peaceful life" in preference to such traditional kingly recreations as the hunt had already lost him much respect among the people, reported the Venetian ambassador,[11] and this public revulsion was to augment as the king's behaviour grew ever more eccentric. For example, he developed a mania for collecting small dogs, and was described by the future duke of Sully as receiving foreign delegations while accoutred "like a cheese-seller, with a basket hung on a ribbon around his neck, in which were two or three little dogs no bigger than your fist."[12] Even Henry's religious observances went far beyond any socially acceptable expression of devoutness to become a form of bizarre exhibitionism: he founded an order of flagellants with whom he walked through the streets of his capital scourging himself publicly for his sins, and he often withdrew into long religious vigils during which he became lost in intense melancholia.

Perhaps these personal vagaries would have occasioned less comment had they not been accompanied by a taste for luxury which meant that great sums of money were often spent on the king's peculiar whims. Indeed, Henry's concept of public finance was so vague and his preference for extravagance so central to his personality that he apparently failed to comprehend the public wrath aroused by his costly excursions around the countryside in search of ever tinier dogs, by his ostentatious entertainments at court, or by the apparently limitless generosity with which he showered his favourites. It was the latter trait which attracted the most opprobrium, for as he slowly sought to free himself from his mother's domination, the king surrounded himself at court with a coterie who became known contemptuously as "mignons." It has been suggested that the decades of civil war had taught Henry to distrust the great aristocrats who normally would have constituted his closest associates, and that in prefering members of the lesser nobility he was attempting to create a king's party whose loyalty to the monarch would be undivided.[13] This was probably an element in the king's decision, but in choosing nonentities devoid of political strength, Henry gained no significant allies and indeed had to drain his own treasuries to support his friends in a style suitable to the king's confidants; moreover, in selecting his favourites, the king showed himself a poor judge of character.

Although the question of Henry's sexuality is of little relevance beyond its impact upon contemporary public opinion, it cannot be denied that he frequently favoured courtiers on the basis of their youth and beauty rather than other merits, and as a group, the favourites apparently earned the vicious description left by the memoirist L'Estoile:

> These pretty mignons wore their hair artificially waved, curled, and re-curled, wearing on top their little velvet bonnets (like whores in a bordello) with their neck-ruffles so wide . . . that seeing the head above the ruffle was like seeing the head of St. John the Baptist on a platter; the rest of their dress was of the same sort; their duties were to play, blaspheme, leap, dance, quarrel, debauch, and follow the king everywhere and in all society, doing nothing and saying nothing except to please him.[14]

When such individuals remained mere companions, they could excite only ridicule and contempt, but once they were elevated to positions of political importance, they could become a severe liability to the king. The early 1580's witnessed the rise to prominence of two mignons whose petty backgrounds did not prevent Henry from creating them the dukes of Joyeuse and Épernon and subsequently showering them not only with jewels but with governments. Joyeuse was little more than a rapacious and vainglorious courtier, but Épernon was an individual of some competence who might have served Henry well had his overbearing haughtiness not offended every other royal supporter and servant. At little gain to the monarchy, Henry's policy of favouritism alienated the nobility, infuriated the taxpayers, and generally caused a further loss of respect for the sovereign himself.

Scorned by the people and isolated from valuable support, Henry lacked the innate ability to withstand a political crisis. Although his intelligence rendered him an incisive analyst, he grew less and less capable of transmuting insight into action, and his immediate response to stress was to escape into frivolity or religion. Given the nature of sixteenth century monarchy as an intensely personal institution, the king's limitations were to prove disastrous to the French crown.

Henry III's foppish existence at court was anathema to the huguenot leader who was to become heir to the French throne. Only two years younger than his Valois cousin, by 1584 Henry of Navarre was an experienced commander whose successful preservation of his co-religionists argued his political skill as well as military capability. Reflecting the rigours of camp life in his casual dress and indifference to cleanliness, Navarre could not have provided a greater physical contrast to the fastidious king; the not infrequent meetings of the two as youths had only underlined the lack of sympathy between them, a clash that was aggravated by Navarre's unhappy marriage to the French king's sister, Marguerite of Valois. Thus, beyond the religious conflict and the legacy of distrust left by the Saint Bartholomew's day massacre, there existed a fundamental discord of temperament which helped prevent a rapprochement between the two Henries. Although Navarre's practical abilities would have made him an invaluable ally to the inept French king, and the calvinist's status as heir to the throne made him a pivotal figure in the wars of the late 1580's, to a large extent he stood offstage while the drama between king and League was played.

If Navarre was to wait in the wings, centre stage was taken by Henry, third duke of Guise.[15] Scion of the foremost ultra-catholic family in France, Guise probably would have inherited the mantle of catholic hero even had he not desired it: he was the eldest son of Francis of Guise, a popular soldier whose accomplishments included the recapture of Calais from the English and the massacre of huguenots at Vassy, and whose career had been cut short by a calvinist assassin; he was the nephew of Charles, cardinal Lorraine, by far the most powerful prelate in France and one of the ablest politicians of his era. But beyond the merits of his pedigree, Guise was himself an attractive figure—tall, blond, handsome, physically graceful, naturally gracious. Only one year older than Henry III, Guise had spent much of his time since childhood on military campaigns where he acquired a reputation for valour as well as an honourable war wound which won him the affectionate nickname of "*le Balafré*" (or "Scarface"). Beyond his family's traditional identification with the ultra-catholic interest, Guise harboured a personal hatred for the calvinists whom he held responsible for his father's death, and the young duke's instigating role in the St. Bartholomew's day massacre established beyond doubt his credentials for the leadership of the extreme catholics. Yet Guise's many attributes were overshadowed by one trait which he had inherited to a degree unprecedented even in his family--his ambition. In two generations the Guises had risen from half-foreign upstarts to be the most powerful nobles in France, but the third duke was to raise his sights ever higher until the crown itself did not seem beyond his grasp.

The precipitating cause of the ultra-catholic resurgence lay in the death of the king's younger brother, the duke of Anjou, in June 1584.[16] Anjou's life often had been irritating to Henry III, but his death proved calamitous, for with his decease the heir to the French throne was the huguenot leader, Henry of Navarre. Although at thirty-three years of age, Henry III could not be considered elderly, it seemed unlikely that he would have children, for his marriage of nearly ten years remained barren, he was credited with no illegitimate offspring, and neither he nor his queen enjoyed robust health. Thus, unless some preventive action were taken, it appeared inevitable that sooner or later the French crown would pass to the calvinist king of Navarre. The horror that a heretical succession engendered among many catholics should not be underestimated. The concept of toleration as a viable policy did not come easily to minds accustomed to the practice of cuius regio eius religio, by which the religious complexion of a populace was determined by the creed of the ruler. In addition, whatever indications Navarre may have given of his personal humaneness and magnanimity, he could not dispel the dominant impression of calvinism as a particularly intolerant doctrine whose adherents had proved themselves ruthless opponents of catholicism in past wars. Furthermore, families such as the Guises who had distinguished themselves as the traditional religion's staunchest defenders had the most to fear from a calvinist king, for it seemed impossible that some revenge would not be exacted for such atrocities as the Saint Bartholomew's day massacre. To prevent this dismal prospect of a heretical succession, the ultra-catholics had to organize, and the leadership of this movement fell naturally to the duke of Guise.

When Henry III reacted to Anjou's death by sending a delegation to Navarre asking him to convert to catholicism, Guise and his brothers took this sign of compromise as sufficient pretext to quit the French court in disgust, and they retired to their lands in north-east France "on very bad terms with the court and in great jealousy," as the king's secretary Villeroy commented.[17] On their estates in Champagne far from the sovereign's surveillance, the family held a conclave which represented a considerable segment of the French aristocracy: the duke of Guise could look for support to his two younger brothers, the duke of Mayenne and Louis cardinal Guise, to his first cousins, the dukes of Aumale and Elbeuf and the chevalier Aumale, and, less assuredly, to the head of the entire clan, the duke of Lorraine, whose preference for a peaceful existence usually was superseded by his sense of family solidarity. In planning the establishment of an official nation-wide association of men in arms who would force the implementation of ultra-catholic policies, Guise and his cohorts revived the oath of loyalty that had been incorporated into the manifest of the League of Péronne, thus evoking the most successful precursor of their embryonic union which had even enjoyed royal sanction. The problem of whom to propose as a valid alternative to the calvinist heir to the throne was solved when Guise enticed Navarre's sexagenarian uncle, Charles cardinal Bourbon,[18] into agreeing to present himself as the catholic claimant to the throne; therefore, all subsequent ultra-catholic proclamations were made in the name of the cardinal, but the real power obviously rested with the duke of Guise. By the winter of 1584 a nucleus of the ultra-catholic movement had been created, but Guise was experienced enough to know that any successful insurgency required money, and for financial support he turned to Philip II of Spain.[19]

Spanish ties with the Guise family had existed since the early 1560's and had strengthened in the 1570's through mutual interest in the fate of the imprisoned Mary Queen of Scots, who was Guise's first cousin.[20] On religious grounds, Philip's commitment to international catholicism made his affinity with the French ultra-catholic party easily explicable; however, his willingness to subsidize Guise's faction was rooted also in Habsburg self-interest. Revolt in the Low Countries against Philip's authority had given France a splendid opportunity to revert to the anti-Spanish policy which had prevailed for the first half of the sixteenth century. Spanish interests could be safeguarded either by the establishment in France of a friendly ultra-catholic regime which would be in Philip's debt, or by the intensification of internal disorder to the point that France would be unable to embark upon foreign adventures. As the revitalization of the League under the dynamic duke of Guise seemed likely to accomplish at least the latter end, the Spanish king sent one of his agents to meet with the ultra-catholic leader at his family seat of Joinville.

The resulting Treaty of Joinville,[21] which was signed on 31 December 1584, represented the intermingling of religion and politics which was to characterize the relationship between Spain and the League. Provisions dealing with religious matters denied the legality of a heretical succession and hence recognized the cardinal Bourbon as heir to the throne, promised the introduction within France of the decrees of the Council of Trent, and pledged a joint campaign to eradicate heresy in France and the Low Countries. Upon his accession to the throne, the titular League leader was to implement fully the Treaty of Câteau-Cambrésis, including the specific restitution of the city of Cambrai, and as an additional territorial concession, all lands south of the Pyrenees currently held by the king of Navarre were to pass to Philip. Furthermore, all French princes were to desist from any acts interfering with Spanish trade with the Indies, and they renounced any future Turkish alliance. In return, Philip was to provide the League with an annual subsidy of 50,000 escudos, and he was to contribute money and manpower to maintain a continuing alliance between France and Spain. By these terms, the French signatories agreed to a considerable surrender of sovereignty (although it is questionable to what extent they would have fulfilled these pledges had one of the ultra-catholics actually attained the crown), but in return the Treaty of Joinville assured Guise of immediate financial and diplomatic support from Spain in the forthcoming struggle for supremacy within France.

Thus the beginning of 1585 witnessed the birth of an ultra-catholic movement unprecedented in support, in organization, and in ambition. Exploiting the sympathies of a catholic majority irritated by concessions to the huguenots, fearful of a calvinist succession, angered by royal inability to enforce religious uniformity, and suspicious of the apparent unconcern with which the king regarded this failure, the faction's leaders succeeded in transforming general discontent into a potent political force. While organizational strength was drawn chiefly from the extensive Guise family connection and its attendant adherents, the revival of an oath of loyalty to the League and its leaders as had been used in 1576 provided a means of extending the ultra-catholic structure beyond the limits of personal fealty. Nevertheless, much of the League's rapid growth undoubtedly resulted from the dynamism of its actual (if not titular) leader, the duke of Guise. The ease with which he wore the mantle of catholic hero lent credence to League claims that the movement existed only to force the implementation of policies which would ensure the preservation of the true religion and the safety of her supporters; however, under Guise's audacious leadership, less disinterested motives for the ultra-catholics' actions were to become apparent.

While Guise spent the first few months of 1585 in consolidating League strength and employing Spanish funds to purchase additional arms and men, the ominous absence of his family from court had not gone unnoticed. Yet in the face of what could be incipient rebellion, the king devoted his time to drawing up a new book of courtly etiquette containing regulations so complex "that it is impossible that this nation could observe them."[22] Slightly more practical was the introduction of a second innovation, the Quarante-Cinq--a group of forty-five young gentlemen who formed a royal bodyguard twenty-four hours a day.[23] Bound to the king by a personal oath of loyalty, these armed guards were meant to protect the uneasy Valois from threats of physical violence, Guise-inspired or otherwise; however, unimpressed courtiers referred to them as the "coupe-jarrets," or "hamstringers."[24]

At the same time, Henry's relations with foreign powers did nothing to allay the suspicions of those subjects who saw his failure to exterminate the huguenots as a mark of sympathy for the new religious teachings. In an impressive ceremony at court early in 1585 he showed himself honoured to accept the Order of the Garter as a reward for his "sincere and perfect friendship and affection" from the royal arch-heretic, Elizabeth of England.[25] Such an award could be disregarded as empty formality, of course, but another protestant lure about the same time had far greater implications.

In January of 1585 a delegation from the Netherlands arrived in France to offer Henry sovereignty over the Low Countries.[26] Despite English hopes (and Spanish fears), it is doubtful that the French king ever gave the proposal serious consideration, for the delegation received no audience with the king until six weeks after its arrival.[27] The appeal from the Dutch rebels flattered the French king, "having occasion greatly to esteem such a fine and notable offer, which is one of the most remarkable ever made, and not to one of my predecessor kings."[28] However, at least one of Henry's advisors interpreted the deputies' cautious phrases as a bid for maximal French aid with minimal French control, resulting in a sovereignty which was no more than a "greatness in the air."

The discussions also foundered on Henry's profound disinclination towards activity. Unlike his late brother Anjou, the king was no seeker of military glory. His two favourites lacked their master's distaste for such adventures, and had they worked together they might have persuaded Henry to take some action, but as early as January 1585 Joyeuse and Épernon were quarrelling over the possible spoils of the hypothetical expedition.[30] Upset by this unpleasantness, the French king swore that "rather than that there should be dissension between them, he would give over this matter and never hear of it more."[31] Henry was ever a peace lover.

Yet negotiations were prolonged by more than the king's customary indecision. Upon news of the Netherlanders' arrival, the Spanish ambassador, Bernardino de Mendoza, demanded not only that the French monarch refuse them audience but that he apprehend them as rebels and send them to the Spanish king.[32] Understandably enraged, Henry informed the over-confident ambassador, "in a great choler, that he was nobody's subject nor at commandment; that his realm was free for all comers, and his ears open to hear everybody. . . ."[33] The Valois sense of dignity, always ultra-sensitive, had been offended. Thus Henry gave the Dutch offer more apparent consideration than he might have done otherwise, creating the possibility of a French intervention as a salve to wounded royal pride. At any rate, Mendoza was sufficiently alarmed by the capricious king to utter private threats that "if there were no other remedy, he had a means to put such a dissension in the court, that the King should be more busy to appease it than to look to other matters."[34] By the time that Henry gave an ultimate refusal to the Flemish delegation in March, the Spaniard's ominous prophecy seemed to have been fulfilled.

PROLOGUE: FOOTNOTES

[1] Background information on the wars of religion in France can be found in: Jean-Hippolyte Mariéjol, La Réforme et la Ligue - L'Edit de Nantes (1559-1598), VI, pt. 1, of Histoire de France depuis les origines jusqu'à la Révolution, ed. by Ernest Lavisse (9 vols.; Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1900-1911), cited hereafter as Lavisse; Lucien Romier, Le Royaume de Catherine de Médicis (2 vols.; Paris: Perrin et Cie, 1922); J. E. Neale, The Age of Catherine de Medici (London: Jonathan Cape, 1943), cited hereafter as Neale; James Westfall Thompson, The Wars of Religion in France, 1559-1576 (New York: F. Ungar, 1957).

[2] Most useful of the many biographies of Catherine de Medici was: Jean-Hippolyte Mariéjol, Catherine de Médicis, 1519-1589 (Paris: Boulevard Saint-Germain, 1920). Of primary sources, by far the most important collection is: Catherine de Medici, Lettres, ed. by Hector de la Ferrière and Gustave Baguenault de Puchesse (11 vols.; Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1880-1943), cited hereafter as Lettres.

[3] L. P. d'Anquetil, L'Esprit de la Ligue, ou Histoire politique des troubles de France, pendant les XVIe et XVIIe siècles (4 vols.; Paris: Chez Delalain, 1771), II, 171.

[4] Cited in full in Agrippa d'Aubigné, Histoire universelle (10 vols.; Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1886-1909), V, 97-105. Cited hereafter as Aubigné.

[5] Cited in full in Pierre-Victor Palma Cayet, Chronologie Novenaire, XXXVIII of Collection complète des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France, ed. by C. B. Petitot (131 vols.; Paris: Foucault, 1819-1829), 254-257. Cited hereafter as Palma Cayet; collection cited hereafter as Petitot.

[6] Jean Loutchitzky, Documents inédits pour servir à l'histoire de la Réforme et la Ligue (Paris: Sandoz et Fischbacher, 1875), 42-44.

[7] Henrico Caterino Davila, The History of the Civil Wars of France (London: Henry Herringman, 1678), 231. Cited hereafter as Davila.

[8] Jean Dumont, Corps universel diplomatique (8 vols.; Amsterdam: Chez P. Brunel, 1726-1731), V, pt. 1, 302-311. Cited hereafter as Dumont.

[9] Biographical information concerning the young Henry is found in: Pierre Champion, La jeunesse de Henri III (2 vols.; Paris: B. Grasset, 1941-1942); a more complete but less creditable biography is by Philippe Erlanger, Henri III (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1948).

[10] N. M. Sutherland, The French Secretaries of State in the Age of Catherine de Medici (London: The Athlone Press, 1962), 230. Cited hereafter as Sutherland.

[11] N. Tommaseo, ed., Relations des ambassadeurs vénitiens sur les affaires de France au XVIe siècle (2 vols.; Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1838), II, 235.

[12] Maximilien de Béthune, duke of Sully, Mémoires des sages et royales oeconomies d'estat, domestiques, politiques et militaires de Henry le grand, Petitot, 2nd ser., I, 362.

[13] Neale, 89.

[14] Pierre de L'Estoile, Journal du règne de Henri III (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1943), 122. Cited hereafter as L'Estoile.

[15] Biographical information may be found in René de Bouillé, Histoire des ducs de Guise (4 vols.; Paris: Amyot, 1849-1850), II, 301-579, III, 1-327. Cited hereafter as Bouillé.

[16] Formerly known as the duke of Alençon, upon Henry's accession he succeeded to the title of Anjou.

[17] Villeroy to Bellièvre, 21 July 1584, quoted in Sutherland, 253.

[18] The cardinal was a younger brother of Navarre's father.

[19] The most extensive discussion of their relationship is found in Joseph de Croze, Les Guises, les Valois et Philippe II (2 vols.; Paris: Amyot, 1866), cited hereafter as Croze. A more concise summary is found in Gustave Baguenault de Puchesse, "La Politique de Philippe II dans les affaires de France, 1559-1598," Revue des questions historiques, XXV (1879), 5-66.

[20] De Lamar Jensen, Diplomacy and Dogmatism, Bernardino de Mendoza and the French Catholic League (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 51-53. Cited hereafter as Jensen.

[21] Dumont, V, pt. 1, 441-443.

[22] Giuseppe Canestrini and Abel Desjardins, ed., Négociations diplomatiques de la France avec la Toscane (6 vols.; Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1859-1886): Busini to Vinta, 7 January 1585, IV, 545. Cited hereafter as Negs. Toscane.

[23] L'Estoile, 372.

[24] Less literally, "cut-throats;" Busini to Vinta, 7 January 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 545. Stafford referred to them as the "taillagambi," Great Britain, Public Record Office, Calendar of State Papers Foreign, XIX (1584-1585): Stafford to Walsingham, 7 January 1585, 265. Cited hereafter as CSPF; all dates have been amended to new style.

[25] Elizabeth to Henry III, January 1585, CSPF, XIX, 265.

[26] Stafford to Walsingham, 12 January 1585, CSPF, XIX, 228.

[27] Stafford to Walsingham, 22 February 1585, CSPF, XIX, 273.

[28] Ernest Charrière, ed., Négociations de la France dans le Levant (4 vols.; Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1848-1860): Henry III to Maisse, 17 February 1585, IV, 331. Cited hereafter as Negs. Levant.

[29] Stafford to Walsingham, 22 February 1585, CSPF, XIX, 274.

[30] Stafford to Walsingham, 12 January 1585, CSPF, XIX, 230.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Stafford to Walsingham, 12 January 1585, CSPF, XIX, 228.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Stafford to Walsingham, 12 January 1585, CSPF, XIX, 230.

CHAPTER I

FIRST CONFRONTATION, MARCH-JULY 1585

The spring of 1585 witnessed the emergence of a conflict which was to threaten the very existence of the Valois monarchy. Catalysed by the prospect of a calvinist succession and encouraged by Spanish gold, the duke of Guise raised his family's traditional banner of devotion to the catholic cause; however, he bolstered the usual rhetoric with demonstrable military might that he apparently would not hesitate to use against Henry III if necessary. Weakened by his realm's past ten years of disorders which had exhausted the treasury and alienated the major aristocratic factions, the king awoke slowly to the danger of revolt by his own co-religionists.[1]

As the strength of ultra-catholic sentiment revealed itself, it was evident that Henry's feeble display of authority over the Low Countries had backfired. Although his flirtation with protestant powers was no personal innovation in French foreign policy (which had long been directed against the Habsburg hegemony), the unhappy Valois faced a situation unknown to his more fortunate predecessors who had played the diplomatic game without undue attention to religious rules. The growth of a catholic opposition eager to interpret any apparent inconsistency as an indication of heretical sympathies meant that without gaining material advantage in the form of a working alliance or financial aid, Henry had weakened an already shaky hold upon his subjects' affections by arousing further suspicions about the sincerity of his catholicism.[2]

As early as February 1585 there had been rumours of a Guise insurrection aimed at kidnapping the king. Some observers dismissed this story as a Spanish fabrication meant to frighten the vacillating monarch out of any action in the Low Countries, for as the English ambassador noted, "a man disposed to do little, will easily, with fear, be brought to do nothing."[3] Yet the chimaera gained substance when a courier from the duke of Bouillon informed Henry that the duke of Guise was raising troops in Germany.[4] Angry and frightened, Catherine de Medici interrogated the cardinal Guise, who disclaimed all knowledge of such suspicious activities and denounced the report as slander spread by heretics against his family.[5]

However, within days it became obvious that more was behind the gossip than heated huguenot imaginations. Troops were being mobilized within the country, yet so confused was the situation that few people were certain of what was intended against whom. Was this a crusade against the new religion, or a rebellion against the state? wondered Estienne Pasquier.[6] Pierre de L'Estoile's speculations were more inventive, if less accurate: was Henry aiding the Dutch? was he joining other princes in a crusade against Geneva? or were the Guises moving against their king?[7]

Whispers of rebellion grew loud enough in March to send the cardinal Guise to Henry in an attempt to defend his family's honour. Reiterating their loyalty to the crown, the cleric claimed that his brother the duke was willing to come to Paris to answer these charges in person, whenever it so pleased the king. Unimpressed, Henry replied curtly that he would believe such rumours as the duke's actions substantiated, and as for the Guises' return to court, "as they went away without cause given them, so he would not send for them again."[8] Once offended, the king would remain offended--until events forced him to a more conciliatory attitude.

Henry's distaste for unpleasant realities showed itself in his contradictory behaviour of the next few weeks. On the one hand, he cited "advertisements from so many places [that] had come to him of evil affected subjects in his own realm"[9] as his reason to refuse involvement in the Dutch rebellion, yet he treated the danger as negligible, claiming he neither believed it nor feared it[10] as he continued his customary social extravagances. What precautions the king did take were negative, not positive: rather than trouble to raise troops himself, he simply forbade all others to recruit. The resulting Mandement du Roy sur la convocation et mostre des compagnies de sa gendarmerie, issued 9 March 1585, outlawed unauthorized assemblies and prohibited the formation of armed units[11]--a naive invocation of legality over force that no one (perhaps not even Henry) took seriously.

As was inevitable, such flagrant inertia in the face of threatening rebellion led to speculation. Was the king somehow in collusion with the Guises?[12] Was this a prelude to renewed campaigns against the huguenots?[13] To many observers, no other explanation could exist for Henry's inactivity.

The folly of the king's optimism was demonstrated within a week, when a barge loaded with weapons and armour was discovered on the Marne just east of Paris, on its way to Guise headquarters in Champagne.[14] The arms were seized, but Henry hesitated over the arrest of the officer in charge, a member of the cardinal's household named La Rochette. By the time the vacillating king made up his mind, Guise's lieutenant had escaped.[15] Now Henry could stay inactive no longer: whatever excuses the Guises might offer, their sovereign could not ignore the reality of their preparations for war.

Paris was abandoned by the princely members of Guise's faction.[16] Earlier, the elderly cardinal Bourbon had travelled to Gaillon, near Rouen; now the cardinal Guise departed for Rheims without taking leave of the king, and when an infuriated Henry sent guards to Elbeuf's house, they found that the duke had fled. Only Guise's sister, Madame de Montpensier, remained at court; and although Henry spoke of using troops to keep her in Paris, he did nothing.

Action was imperative, yet Henry still did not appear unduly worried (or unduly active).[17] Despite the obviously military nature of the situation, the king attempted a less bellicose solution: couriers were sent to the three Guise brothers and to the cardinal Bourbon[18] to ask for explanations of the recent "maulvais bruitz" and "nouveaux remuemens."[19] Conciliation, not intimidation, was the royal approach—as was demonstrated by Catherine de Medici's mildly reproachful letters to the recalcitrants.[20] Pacific by nature, Henry apparently failed to see that the militant organization of discontent had made negotiation an ineffective remedy unless the royal position were strengthened by the threat of less gentle methods of persuasion.

The king made few moves to create such resources. Publicly, he repeated his ineffectual prohibition of troop levies;[21] privately, he asked his closest supporters to be ready should he call upon them[22]--neither measure an adequate response to the dangers he faced. What caused this pusillanimity? Perhaps Henry feared hastening Guise wrath, as was suggested by unsympathetic contemporaries,[23] or perhaps he hoped to demonstrate that the catholic rebels, and they alone, were the aggressors in the emerging conflict. Given the complexity of the Valois personality, elements of truth can be seen in both interpretations; however, again the principal explanation seems to lie in that profound irresolution that dominated the king in moments of crisis. Hesitant to act, once more Henry flung himself into his "foolish devotions."[24]

Unfortunately, it was soon obvious that the king would have reaped more immediate rewards had he concerned himself with the state of his army rather than the state of his soul. Despite royal instructions prohibiting entry to those accompanied by more than personal servants,[25] on 21 March the town of Châlons-sur-Marne opened its gates to the triumphal duke of Guise, who promptly installed a garrison of his own supporters in the city.[26] The duke explained his behaviour as sheer self-defence, claiming to have received warnings that troops were coming from Metz to surprise him at his former camp at Joinville[27]--but these protests deceived no one. His excuses were no more substantial than the nonexistent companies from Metz; France was now in open war.

At last the king felt pressed to act, and with characteristic extremism his habitual indolence was transformed into a furious energy. He turned first to the security of his capital, where fears were such that (according to the English ambassador) "everybody looked . . . to have their throats cut, . . . as well rich men as them of the Religion."[28] On 26 March Henry issued detailed instructions concerning the preparation of the militia[29] and the regulation of the gates of the city; in addition, he ordered that all guests (including their servants and horses) were to be reported instantly, all entries and departures to and from the city were to be listed and brought to the Hôtel-de-Ville, and all boats were to be forbidden the waterways within two leagues of Paris between the hours of eight P. M. and four A. M.[30] A few days later, the king expanded his provision for the militia; however, apparently unsure of the Parisians' loyalty, he named his captains and lieutenants to command the local forces.[31] The new appointees, all prior royal office-holders,[32] were called to the Louvre, where the king himself warned them of the present danger to his state, and asked them "to be good and loyal subjects, and to keep a close watch on their city, and on its gates and avenues."[33] Henry's distrust of the populace further showed itself as each day he sent a reliable courtier around the city to check the gates, "spying upon the actions and countenances of those who were on guard;"[34] and, in fact, the king sometimes inspected them himself.[35]

No longer could Henry be accused of indifference. Yet, despite these sudden (and frantic) efforts, perhaps one sceptic showed insight in his observation that the external pressures "did greatly animate the King _in_ _show_."[36] Beyond precautions taken in Paris to ensure his own immediate safety, what did the worried monarch accomplish for the preservation of his kingdom?

Peace-loving by nature, Henry turned to "the pen and not the sword,"[37] dissipating his energy in writing "an infinity of letters"[38] to subjects whom he hoped would support him. While at last resolving to levy an army,[39] the king moved slowly to effect it[40] and at the same time showed his desire to settle the conflict through less violent means by sending his mother to negotiate with the ultra-catholic rebels, "trying to extinguish the fire before it kindles further."[41]

Thus, almost from the outset, the uncertain king committed himself to a contradictory approach. He was raising forces ostensibly to crush the ingrates who threatened his crown; simultaneously, he was deliberating openly with the traitors, showing his eagerness for some compromise. Henry's obvious distaste for Guise and his party made it clear that he was attempting conciliation because he was afraid that he could not succeed in conquest.

This weakness in time of civil war was partly a result of the king's failure to create his own party among the nobility. Relying on the majesty of his position to compel respect,[42] Henry saw no need to win loyalty by distributing favours; what honours were at royal disposal were heaped upon the two great favourites, Joyeuse and Épernon.[43] Of late, the latter in particular had benefited from the king's generosity to an unprecedented degree. Announcing that "he loved [Épernon] as his brother, and would, if he could, make him as good as himself,"[44] Henry felt that his own resources could provide no adequate recognition of his friend's merit, and went so far as to try to persuade the duke of Mayenne to cede the government of Burgundy.[45] to the "archmignon."[46] Naturally, less fortunate courtiers detested the two successful _parvenus_;[47] and, as a matter of course, they lost regard for the monarch who fostered this inequality. When the time came that Henry needed his traditional military leaders, he was amazed to find difficulty in discerning his own supporters;[48] not having been wooed with past favours, the disgruntled nobles did not anticipate future rewards for service to their king. Henry's blindness to the politics of power had placed a dangerous weapon in the hands of his opponents, who did not hesitate to use it.

The nobility's alienation from the crown was exploited in the _Declaration des causes qui ont meu Mgr le cardinal de Bourbon, et les princes, pairs, prélats, seigneurs, villes et communautez catholiques de ce royaume de France, de s'opposer a ceux qui veulent subvertir la religion catholique et l'Estat_[49]--the League's official manifest, issued in the name of its titular head, the cardinal Bourbon, on 31 March 1585.[50] Although this document first claimed that the rebels' principal motivation was fear for their religion, the balance of the manifest was composed of secular grievances, the most virulent of which were directed against

> the actions of certain persons who, having crept into the king's friendship, . . . have seized his authority for themselves, and, to maintain themselves in the grandeur that they have usurped, favour and procure by all means the effecting of these [heretical] pretensions, and have had the effrontery . . . to distance from the king not only the princes and the nobility, but all who are closest to him, giving access to none but their own men.

Listing the favourites' accumulation of positions, the manifest declared that the security of all office-holders was endangered by the two courtiers' rapaciousness. Having "drained to themselves all the gold and silver from the king's coffers," the mignons had gained the power to play kingmakers and would impose a successor of their own choosing upon the kingdom; furthermore, asserted the manifest, unless this situation were remedied rapidly, everyone would continue to suffer the "infinite other oppressions being born from day to day at the appetite of their disordered desires."

However extreme (and improbable) these conclusions, most nobles shared the envy and bitterness that had provoked the diatribe. To the king's surprise, many of his experienced captains defected to the League,[51] and others who remained loyal to Henry did not conceal their belief that certain of Guise's complaints were legitimate.[52]

If his traditional supporters were reluctant to stand by the king, there were other allies to be found--such as the huguenots, who were, overtly, the intended victims of the League's crusade. If Henry were to turn to the French calvinists in his struggle against the ultra-catholics, such an alliance would not be uncongenial to many huguenots who hoped to gain some advantage from this new complication of the French political scene. Since the king's personal dislike of the Guises was as obvious as the secular nature of their League, some huguenots hoped that these two factors might combine to produce a distinction between religious faith and political loyalty. Good Roman catholics could show themselves as traitors; at last, could not huguenots be recognized as Henry's faithful servants?

Henry of Navarre sought to define and exploit this differentiation. Dismissing the Leaguers' religious convictions as a mere pretext for personal aggrandizement while emphasizing their political demands upon royal prerogatives, he forwarded all information about the League's activities in his area to the French king.[53] Navarre hoped thus to accomplish a dual purpose: he would convince his hesitant brother-in-law of the huguenots' good will as he discredited the ultra-catholics for their political machinations. When Guise actually took up arms, the king of Navarre decried the act as simple treason and sent reassurances of his own loyalty to the French crown: "Believe me, my lord, that no one will bring you more fidelity, diligence, and affection than myself."[54] Wanting Henry III to move decisively against the League, Navarre made offers of support (with "grandes fidelitez et des soubmissions à ses pieds")[55] in a campaign to preserve royal authority, "for which I will employ my life and all my resources forever."[56] Most of all, the huguenot king tried to impress upon his catholic suzerain the particular similarity of their interests in this matter: the League manifest presented "a declaration of war openly against all those who profess the [calvinist] religion," but it was just as surely "a covert [declaration of war] against the state and the royal house of France."[57]

Henry III's attitude towards the huguenots was, as usual, inconsistent. When Guise's bellicose intentions became apparent, the French king sent word to the calvinists to be on their guard but to make no show of arming,[58] for "by remaining peaceful, they condemned the arms of the League."[59] Realizing that open protestant preparations would make civil war inevitable no matter what stance he took, Henry tried to reassure the huguenots of his determination to protect them: he would maintain the edicts of toleration, "or else . . . he wished God to confound him; and that he affirmed with the greatest protestations and deepest oaths that could be."[60] However, when it came to a recognized military alliance with non-catholics, the king was less vehement. He threatened such a step in an audience with the papal nuncio on 4 April 1585, when, greatly offended by rumours that the pope favoured the League, Henry stormed that "he would be constrained to take what help he could to defend himself."[61] Yet, when less angry and thus less bold, the French monarch instead advised the huguenots to "slip their men of war into the king's troops"[62] while he informed certain royal recruiters that calvinists would be "as welcome and as well-used as any."[63] Henry went so far as to suggest that huguenot companies place themselves under the command of a catholic officer in order to serve the royal cause,[64] but he could not decide to use his potential allies in any less clandestine manner.

The complexity of decision-making seemed to weaken Henry's initial resolution concerning the huguenots, [illegible]hough he had found several reasons to enlist their aid. First of all, many of them were eager to join him against the ultra-catholics, showing their enthusiasm for his cause by wearing special insignia that they called symbols of the "Counter-League."[65] Navarre's repeated assurances of loyalty also did their work well: ever conscious of royal dignity, the French king preferred his brother-in-law's respectful pledges to the duke of Guise's arrogant disregard. In addition, Henry recognized that Navarre's position as successor to the French throne gave him an interest in preserving the royal authority that the king himself was struggling to save. Yet, generally, Henry's inclination towards the huguenots grew less from logic than from desperation: if the king were to meet the League in battle, he felt that he needed calvinist troops.

Unfortunately for Henry's peace of mind, he also found strong arguments against a huguenot alliance. Personally a devout catholic, the king had lost his early taste for religious conversion by force without losing his hatred for heretics.[66] Past conflicts imposed a harsh barrier between catholic king and calvinist subject: after years of mutual suspicion, what trust could exist between them? Added to Henry's personal misgivings was the simple fact that most French citizens were Roman catholic. If the king joined with huguenots against the catholic hero Guise, he would give credence to the worst of League propaganda--thus alienating many moderate catholics and probably causing a revolt in his capital city.[67]

Such was the unanimous opinion of his councillors, who saw the solidification of a catholic party separate from the monarchy as intolerable.[68] They also argued that alliance with the huguenots was

> the way, not only to have all the Catholics of this realm against him, but also all strange princes of that religion; when it shall be seen that against them that makest the chiefest title of arming for the religion Catholic, the King shall take succour of heretics, and bring them by that means in opinion that he meaneth to lean to them.[69]

At first Henry stood firm against their advice, declaring that huguenot aid "is necessary for him and he will have it so;"[70] however, under his advisors' disapproval and the terrifying prospect of foreign invasion, the king's momentary determination soon crumbled.

In the meantime, Henry of Navarre grew exasperated with the French king's indecision. Repeating his willingness to fight against the League, the calvinist leader pleaded with Henry III, "If I had the good fortune to be among the first to warn you of this evil, I beg you that I will not have the unhappiness to be among the last under your authority to destroy it."[71] As the days passed without word from the French court, Navarre fumed that favourable opportunities were fading[72]--a fear confirmed by a brief letter from Henry III which began: "My brother, I warn you that, whatever resistance I have made, I have not been able to prevent the evil schemes of the duke of Guise. He is armed; stand on guard. . . ."[73] Such passivity provoked Navarre's reproaches: "For me it is a legitimate regret to be considered useless in your service when there is so great cause to serve you, and when there is need, if ever there was, for you to be well served."[74] Through his inaction, the French king apparently rejected these offers of assistance, thus reviving the huguenots' distrust of the Valois whom they had long regarded as the originator of the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre.[75] Henry's earlier promises of religious toleration were no longer believed, and it seemed probable that he would prefer to arm "against the King of Navarre his faithfull [sic] Subject, than against Catholiques though Rebels."[76]

In fact, this was the situation that the French king was struggling to avoid. Without the military support of the huguenots, he felt too weak to challenge League forces in battle; if he dared not arrange the former, he could not risk the latter. A negotiated peace with Guise's faction was the only solution--and the best way to weaken League pretensions so that a settlement might be made on equitable terms was to win Navarre back to catholicism.[77] Had the strategy succeeded, it would have seriously undermined the League's self-proclaimed *raison d'être*, but the general chaos in France plus Henry's reputation for unreliability prevented its achievement. As should have been expected, Navarre was unwilling to alienate his calvinist followers for the tentative support of a vacillating monarch.[78]

Desperately hoping, nevertheless, for Navarre's conversion, Henry was facing advisors who argued that the only prospect for peace with the League lay in agreeing to war against the huguenots, for "it was better that catholics should make war upon heresy rather than, divided among themselves, they should fight each other."[79] No longer believing that military campaigns could destroy the calvinist faction, the king opposed this solution as the beginning of an unprofitable war that would be "long, bloody, and miserable."[80] Bellièvre alone supported the king's stance, claiming that he did not see how the gargantuan task of extermination could be accomplished any more easily at this time than in the past; furthermore, he objected to the revocation of the king's edicts of toleration without any cause given as a "great blot of reputation."[81]

Certainly, Henry wished to avoid the humiliation of seeming the League's pawn, but his opposition to war against the huguenots derived rather from his appreciation that such a policy was certain to transform his appearance of powerlessness into an inescapable reality. By this time Henry saw Guise, not Navarre, as the chief threat to royal power, and any weakening of the huguenots would only increase the king's own vulnerability to the catholic duke's ambition. Henry perceived this danger more clearly than any of his council, for when some advised him to make peace with the League regardless of the conditions imposed:

> the King answered with great choler in show, that they were best counsel him to put off his hose and his shirt, and being

> stript stark naked, give them with his own hand a rod to whip himself withal. That he would speak nothing till [the Leaguers] were disarmed; that being done, he would consent to any reasonable petition they would make, but that he meant not to be a colour to defeat them under his authority that had not offended him [the huguenots], to leave [the Leaguers] armed, after the defeat of [the huguenots], to defeat him and use him as they listed; that that was but a way to defer his harm and perchance to make it worse, when they should have the opportunity and nobody to let them.[82]

Navarre had to be preserved as a counterweight to Guise.

While Henry struggled with his conscience and his council, the royal position deteriorated further. In the first week of April, despite reports that the League was well supplied with veteran soldiers and funds[83] (both of which the monarchy lacked), the volatile king enjoyed a sudden spurt of optimism; or, as the English ambassador described it, "The King is nothing so amazed as he was, nor feareth not [sic], for he findeth that they are not so strong as they were made."[84] Now that the smoke was clearing from the first outbreak of rebellion, it appeared that only the towns of Châlons-sur-Marne and Dijon (Guise's and Mayenne's respective headquarters) had declared for the League; moreover, the city of Rheims, which had been counted as lost to the royal cause, sent assurances of loyalty as soon as the cardinal Guise left its gates.[85] These fortuitous events contributed to Henry's blissfully unrealistic image of the League's true strength--a misperception that was shattered by the loss of the city of Orléans.

Informed that the governor of Orléans, Entragues, had strong League sympathies, the king had sent the governor's brother (a more trustworthy royalist) to relieve Entragues, temporarily, of his command.[86]

Upon the governor's refusal to relinquish his position, Henry dispatched a small force under the duke of Montpensier and the marshal d'Aumont to convince the recalcitrant of his duty to the king, but the royal emissaries were "received and saluted with cannon shot."[87] Leaving Entragues in control, Montpensier and Aumont returned to Paris, where they reported the setback to an "astonied"[88] [sic] king. Bitterly reflecting upon the strategic value of the rebel city and fearfully wondering how many places on the Loire would follow Orléans' example,[89] Henry received word of a further demonstration of League power: the towns of Mézières, Auxonne, and Mâcon had all fallen to the ultra-catholics.[90]

Although protesting "I do what I can to fortify myself in order to oppose their plans by force,"[91] in fact the king had done little to prevent the League's takeover of the towns. Within a few days came news that Chartres and Rouen were in rebel hands.[92] Even the mercenaries that Henry was recruiting in Switzerland were threatened by the League, for Mayenne seemed intent on cutting off their entry into France.[93] In the midst of these calamities, Henry's optimism fled, and he faced the future assured of nothing "but as badly and as uncertainly as ever I saw."[94]

Meanwhile, the small town of Épernay witnessed Catherine de Medici's struggle to stave off the ruin foreseen by her son. On 9 April 1585 she held her first meeting with the duke of Guise, who remained non-conciliatory despite the queen's proceeding "with temperate advice rather to defend than to offend and to appease than suppress."[95] Insistent upon opening discussions on no topic other than religion, Guise accused the French king not merely of failing to eradicate heresy but of entering into a treaty with England and Geneva to encourage the false doctrines. Catherine's denial of such a policy made no apparent impression upon the catholic duke, nor did her reassurances of "[the king's] good favour, when he should render himself worthy of it"[96] result in any overtures from the League captain. Not surprisingly, the old queen's reprimands concerning a League seizure of royal funds at Châlons gained no offer of compensation from Guise,[97] whose unbending attitude betrayed a lack of serious interest in any compromise with the king at this time. After failing to transfer the talks to Paris, where catholic feelings ran high, Guise declared himself unable to enter into negotiations without other League notables--a condition which necessitated a few weeks' delay.[98] The duke's subsequent departure from Épernay (ostensibly to confer with his colleagues) prompted one anti-Guisard to comment, "I am afraid that all this is but to delay time and to have their things the readier."[99] Future events were to justify such cynicism.

Nevertheless, the determined queen mother immediately sought to gain some advantage from Guise's absence. Armed with a promise of royal good will, she worked on Guise's wife to the point that Catherine felt confident "she will do us as good a turn as she can,"[100] while the arrival at Épernay of the duke of Lorraine (head of the house whose cadet branch included the Guises) gave the elderly queen a further chance to put familial pressure on the League leader. Despite one observer's comment that such action was as useless as "speak[ing] to the wolf to speak to her whelps to come back from seeking to get meat,"[101] Catherine hoped that the pacific Lorraine might be persuaded to use his considerable influence as a restraint upon his ambitious cousins.[102] Rivalries within the League itself provided another opportunity for Medici machinations: the discontented Mayenne might be lured away from his brothers' party,[103] while the docile cardinal Bourbon seemed willing to be led back into the royalist fold. So great was the Guises' apprehension lest the League's titular head defect that they prevented the cardinal from ever seeing the queen mother alone,[104] for "they fear she will do with him what she listeth."[105] Catherine's relentless politicking evidently had its effect, for the first crack in the League facade of principled solidarity soon appeared: a subordinate informed the queen mother that Guise likely would return to obedience "if he could have some 'colour' for his honour and security of his person and his associates."[106] In short, it looked as if the League leadership might be bought off.

Yet Catherine was too shrewd to let her indolent son rest all hopes for settlement upon her abilities as a negotiator. Although reportedly upset by the king's sending cannon against Orléans (which would hinder her chances "to bring matters to a peaceable end")[107] she continually encouraged Henry to build up his own forces, if only to strengthen his position at the bargaining table: "I am of your own opinion that baston porte paix, thus you must have your forces as soon as possible, for there is nothing that helps as much to bring peace."[108] After reporting some small progress at Épernay, Catherine repeated her warning:

> These hopes of compromise . . . . must not make you defer anything from the haste required for the accumulation of your forces and for the provision of money and the other things necessary for war. For, when you are well prepared, you will always have a more advantageous peace.[109]

An experienced politician, the queen mother saw the necessity of presenting a show of strength to create the illusion that the king had some viable alternative to a settlement with the League. Without apparent military preparations on Henry's part, the Guises could not be bluffed into moderating their demands: should the royalist desperation to avoid an armed clash become evident, the League would feel in a position to dictate the terms for peace. Foreseeing this humiliation as the result of her son's inefficiency, Catherine could have been made only more frantic by Bellièvre's reports from Paris, in which he offered the pessimistic observation:

> We do here what we can; but the more I think about it, the more I am of the opinion that this miserable kingdom is near its end, if God does not permit this excitement to be finished quickly by a good reconciliation.[110]

The perennially ambitious queen mother did not dislike being given the responsibility for the future of France, but she feared that the king's procrastination would jeopardize her chances for success.

Urged to activity, Henry accomplished little beyond an official declaration in answer to the League's manifest.[111] Defensive in tone, this "feeble and timorous"[112] document offered less a justification of the royalist position than a series of rebuttals to specific charges levelled by the ultra-catholics, and as such it lacked the forcefulness of effective propaganda. First of all, the king protested the sincerity of his Roman catholicism, asserting that his unwillingness to campaign against the huguenots arose not from a lack of zeal but from an appreciation that peace was of greater benefit to France. In contrast to the idyllic tranquillity that Henry claimed his kingdom had enjoyed for the past few years, he asked his subjects to "open their eyes here, and not to perswade [sic] themselves that this War will end so easily as they give out; but to comprehend . . . the inevitable consequences of it." As for the problem of succession to the throne, the king proposed no solution except that he and his wife were both young and in good health, and as such were confident of issue; any suggestion that he or his advisors favoured a huguenot claimant was labelled "a thing which his Majesty prayes and admonishes his Subjects to believe he never so much as thought." The question of excessive taxation was not mentioned (except in a statement that a war inevitably would increase the levies), while League accusations concerning the distribution of offices were dismissed as "a weak and dishonourable foundation to build the ruine [sic] and subversion of so flourishing a Kingdom, whose Kings were never constrained to make use of one more than of another, for there is no Law obliges them to do so." Furthermore, he claimed, he had bestowed honours fairly upon the nobility; whatever slight clashes might have occurred between office-holders, "shall it be said at this present . . . that private interests and discontents were the occasions of overturning a whole State, and of filling it with blood and desolation?" Thus Henry dispensed with the League's recital of injustices; and its leaders' assertion that they had taken up arms in defence against impending "Treachery" was treated as an allegation that "none can believe . . . can at all concern his Majesty, by nature so far from any kind of Revenge, that the man is yet unborn, who can, with reason, make any such complaint against him." This promise of clemency introduced a royal appeal for the cessation of hostilities:

> his Majesty prayes, and exhorts the Heads of the said Tumults and Commotions, presently to disband their Forces, to send

> back strangers, to separate themselves from all Leagues, and laying aside all enterprises, as his Kinsmen and Servants, to take a perfect assurance of his friendship and good-will.

In conclusion, Henry asked his subjects:

> to weigh the consequences of these commotions, sincerely to embrace his intention, and to believe that his chief aim hath ever been, and ever shall be, to do good to all, but neither harm nor displeasure to any; commanding them most strictly . . . to separate and withdraw themselves from all Leagues and Associations, and to reunite themselves with him, as nature, their duty, and their own good and safety doth oblige them.

As a battle cry for king and country, the declaration was unconvincing; as an exposition of royal policy, it was totally inadequate. In his stated preference for peace over war, Henry failed to recognize that for decades France had known no true peace, but only uneasy intervals of nominal truce between times of open fighting. Thus the king appeared to offer not a genuine cessation of hostilities, but a further period of uncertainty--an uncertainty now aggravated by most catholics' legitimate fears of a protestant heir to the throne. Again, the royal proclamation gave no comfort in this respect, for Henry politely evaded the problem by hoping for children of his own (an unrealistic solution in light of his marriage's barrenness over ten years and the royal couple's weak health). In secular matters, the king showed no more perspicacity: his refusal to admit inequalities in the distribution of offices and his avoidance of all charges of financial mismanagement clearly offered little hope for the redress of grievances in either sphere. With remarkable political ineptitude, Henry did not even dangle the usual counter-revolutionary bait of a new session of the Estates General--a potentially popular move which the queen mother herself had recommended to assure all subjects that "you would like to hear them in their complaints and to receive their counsel and advice, so as to give good order and tranquillity to this estate."[113]

Yet it was Henry's attitude towards the Guises that revealed the monarch at his vacillating worst: on the one hand, he accused them openly of deliberate treachery, while, on the other, he swore he would bear them no ill will if they would only return to obedience. Such servility to the League strained belief in the king's martial bluster, providing only frustration for those royalists who believed that:

> the Proclamation of a King against his rebellious Subjects ought to be no other but a good Army, which he may have in a readiness long before them, and reduce them to reason e'er they have time and means to gather Forces sufficient to oppose their Sovereign.[114]

In choosing words, not steel, as his primary defence, the monarch managed to satisfy no one. By relying upon an unimpressive record as king in preference to giving some promise of reform, Henry produced a document which failed to sway his opponents, to convince the undecided, or even to reassure his own supporters.

As might have been expected, the diffident royal declaration did little to clarify the chaotic situation in France. Some League troops joined royalist forces[115] and some catholics offered their services to the king of Navarre,[116] but it was apparent that the initiative remained with Guise and his followers. Henry received nothing but disquieting reports: Dauphiné, which had been thought loyal despite League propagandizing,[117] was now showing signs of unrest; anti-royalist sentiment seemed prevalent in the city of Lyons; ambiguous reassurances from the duke of Mercoeur, governor of Brittany, left no doubt that he and his province might be counted with the League.[118] Although the Spanish ambassador probably exaggerated in his enthusiastic assertion that eighty-eight important towns supported the League,[119] some centres did express a clear preference for Guise's faction[120] while most maintained a watchful neutrality.[121]

The one bright spot in the sombre royal prospect lay in news from Marseilles, where a League attempt upon the city had been foiled and its perpetrators executed.[122] The despondent king seized upon the good tidings with his characteristic volatility, exuberantly promising delegates from the southern city that he would grant "everything that you could ever ask me, for my generosity will never be sufficient to recognize your fidelity."[123] Printed accounts of the treachery and subsequent bloodshed concluded with a ringing exhortation for all men of honour to leave their homes "under [His Majesty's] colours, in order to follow together the example of those of Marseilles."[124] Unfortunately, few seemed inclined to answer the appeal.

While Henry watched his kingdom apparently slip from his control, the queen mother grew exasperated at her inability to reverse this trend. With mounting impatience Catherine awaited Guise's return, expected on 22 April; when he failed to appear, she bombarded him with indignant messages to which she received "not a single word of response, neither verbally nor in writing."[125] The duke's silence was soon explained: he had left Châlons for the neighbourhood of Verdun in an act of audacity that filled Catherine with fury and Henry with fear for Metz and Toul as well.[126] Angry and apprehensive, the queen mother sent word to Guise

> that he would cause himself great harm and her very great displeasure, if he undertook something at Verdun, and that it was necessary for him to come [to Épernay] in order to negotiate and to pacify things, and not to embitter them further, as she saw he was doing wherever he could. . . .[127]

This threat, however, was wasted, as Catherine had feared it would be. News came quickly of the fall of Verdun and of the weakness of Toul, causing the queen mother to direct her reprimands against the ineffectual king who had permitted these serious losses despite her repeated warnings:

> I have often written you . . . that I begged you to provide well for the security of your cities and towns. . .; thus I assured myself that you would not have omitted anything in this matter, but I am nevertheless in great distress over Verdun, Toul, and Metz.[128]

Catherine's worries were fully justified: within a few days word arrived that Toul was putting up only token resistance,[129] and Metz alone remained for the king.

After the success of this excursion, the catholic leaders returned to Épernay on 29 April. The queen mother's vituperative outpourings over League duplicity found Guise unmoved and the cardinal Bourbon remorseful, but neither showed any intention of moderating their earlier demands for the total extermination of protestantism within France.[130] In the face of such intransigeance, Catherine tactfully capitulated. A fifteen-day truce was arranged, during which time Guise agreed to keep his reiters out of France and his troops away from Paris, while the king was to refrain from approaching League forces with his own. During the cease-fire, the duke planned to send to his confederates throughout the country for advice as to what form of anti-huguenot declaration they favoured and for opinions concerning what guarantees they thought necessary for themselves and their associates. In return, the queen mother insisted that the king would use the time to dispatch an emissary to Henry of Navarre urging him to accept a revocation of the edict of tolerance, "the duke of Guise having said (rather coldly, nonetheless) that if that were agreed by them, he would lay down arms."[131] It was, at best, an unlikely hope.

Nevertheless, the beleaguered king of France did not hesitate to clutch at such fragile straws. After signing the truce on 3 May 1585, Henry sent instructions[132] to his mother which agreed to the prohibition of calvinism but repeated the king's intention to persuade Navarre to obey such a revocation. Should the huguenot leader do so, Henry expected the Leaguers to disarm, at which time the king would give them some cities as securities, "although in very small number." Should the protestants resist, Henry agreed to use force against them and for this purpose would unite royal and League troops except for Guise's foreign mercenaries, who were to be sent home before they entered France. Promising that the catholic duke and his colleagues would be given commands in these armies, "as [would] other princes and officers of the crown," the king saw no reason why the Leaguers should require any guarantees; therefore, he asked them to hand over all cities they had taken in the past months of turmoil. Moreover, as royal revenues were insufficient to support a military campaign, Henry asked the ultra-catholics to "reveal the means that they could have to help bear the costs." Finally, whether the future held peace or war for France, the king demanded that the League sever all ties with foreign princes.

Thus the strategy that would underlie Henry's eleventh-hour defence against the League became more intelligible. Once the king had chosen to abandon the certain but dangerous support of the calvinist minority, royal indecision had forced acquiescence to the ultra-catholics' religious aims; however, the king now hoped to dictate the effecting of these goals in such a way that would least threaten monarchical power. First of all, however unlikely its attainment, the king's announced intention to seek huguenot acceptance of proposed spiritual annihilation would provide an opportunity for months' delay, during which time Henry might find more permanent means of curbing the League. Belatedly, he could work at readjusting the comparative strength of sovereign and subjects: by excluding Guise's reiters from France, Henry would gain a more equitable balance of military power while saving his kingdom from the depredations of German mercenaries. In similar fashion, a royal injunction against League dealings with foreign powers (which, outwardly, the catholic princes could not easily refuse) would hamper the flow of Spanish gold into French rebels' coffers, as, simultaneously, it placed all Leaguers in a hypocritical situation from which the king might extract some later political advantage. In a rather forlorn attempt to damp the catholic lords' enthusiasm for war, Henry proclaimed his intention to make the League pay for any campaigns while he linked all promises for individual gain to a total disarmament. If the ultra-catholics declined to choose a pacific existence, their weapons would constitute their security, argued the king, who would compel them (logically, but unrealistically) to return their recent conquests, lest they give rise to the suspicion that Leaguers were "driven by some other dangerous ambition tending to the dissipation of the state."[133] In short, Henry apparently hoped to prevent a rout by staging a strategic retreat, while maintaining a distant chance of ultimate victory.

The king's proposed politics of expedience evidently found favour with the queen mother, as indicated by her reply of 5 May 1585.[134] Pleased with the promise of a new edict of intolerance, she suggested clarifying the status of the huguenots who recanted in accordance with the future legislation: the crown would preserve their lives and property (thus restraining the League from visions of unlimited plunder) and they would be "maintained in their ranks." To ease catholic suspicions of royal vengeance, Catherine thought it wise to reassure the rebels that Henry harboured no malice against those who had armed because of religious principles, but rather called upon them for assistance, pledging "on the faith of a king and the word of a prince that they can arrive in all safety and that he will consider them his good and faithful subjects." And, as a further sop to the League, the queen wished to add one significant provision that her son had not offered--the specific avowal that any successor to the French throne had to be catholic. Without elucidation as to the need for this innovation, she concluded her comments with the pessimistic observation that regardless of Henry's noble intentions, she feared the credit for these changes would go to the League.

Although perceptive, the last remark did not appeal to Valois pride. With naive determination that all gratitude for the militant preservation of the Roman faith should be directed towards the monarchy rather than the rebel prince, in his reply to Catherine[135] Henry declared his intention "to make it apparent to one and all that he has always had more good will and affection in his heart than any other for the advancement and maintenance of the catholic religion." As for the queen mother's other revisions, her son surveyed them with the keen intelligence that he so rarely chose to display. While agreeing to make clear his desire to protect the lives and goods of all subjects, the king attempted to forestall League protests by adding that this applied "even [to] those who, under the pretext of the preservation of this our catholic religion, did lately rise and take up arms." Repeating his wish to unite all catholics with him in order to execute the forthcoming edict, Henry protested that this should be sufficient reassurance without specific reference to the succession. Any such attempt to bind future kings would be of dubious legality, he argued, and probably would gain some vestiges of validity only if made in conjunction with the Estates General--a shrewd suggestion as Guise was showing himself less and less eager to face the traditional assembly.[136] The king might lack the decisiveness to imprint his will on the course of events, but he was showing a diplomat's skill at the delicate arts of defensive manoeuvring.

Unfortunately, the subtleties of royal strategy were wasted on the bluntly realistic duke of Guise. At her next conference with the catholic leaders,[137] the queen mother immediately announced the prospective revocation of religious tolerance; then, cutting short the cardinal Bourbon's verbose exultations, she attempted to discuss means of implementing the new policy "par la doulceur." Lacking his clerical colleague's simplistic enthusiasm and unwilling to waste time in consideration of a program so antithetical to his own interests, Guise quickly brought the conversation around to what he thought essential—the problem of guarantees for League personnel. In the duke's eyes, the points of religion and securities were interrelated so inextricably that he could not talk of one without the other: for their own protection, the ultra-catholics had to possess their "villes de seureté" until every huguenot-held city had fallen to the forces of the one true faith. Sadly warning her son of Guise's inflexibility, Catherine lamented that even if half the royal army were composed of League troops, "they would not leave off wanting to have their securities, which puts me in great pain."

At a formal meeting a few days later the catholic leaders spelled out their demands (except for their specific securities, about which they were still conferring). The only religion practised within France was to be catholic, apostolic, and Roman, and, as a matter of course, all royal office-holders had to belong to the established church. The treatment they recommended for huguenots was harsh: all ministers were to be exiled immediately, all calvinists had to abjure or suffer corporal punishment, and, even if they recanted, they were to be "destituez."[138] Demurring at the extremism of these measures, the queen mother nevertheless found some cause for rejoicing as she wrote her son,

> they have not talked of your successor for the crown, and I think that they are resolved among themselves not to say a further word about it; I would greatly wish that they would do the same concerning their securities. . . .[139]

Such was not to be, however, as within three days the League submitted a full list of what Catherine referred to as "their exorbitant demands."[140]

A detailed expression of the ultra-catholics' dual desires for gain and protection, the Articles presentés au roi consisted of thirty-four articles,[141] which, as befitted the League's avowed reason for existence, began with the topic of religion. Retreating from the inflexible stand of a few days earlier, the Leaguers declared themselves satisfied with the exiling of all non-abjuring calvinists, whose property would be confiscated. Not only were heretics to be barred expressly from public positions, but all officials were to take an oath reaffirming their allegiance to the catholic faith. If these stringent regulations were strengthened by a pledge from the king never to revoke the anti-tolerance edict, the Leaguers seemed confident of the eventual re-catholicization of France. Nevertheless, should arms be required to enforce these provisions, Guise and his party declared their willingness to serve in the crusade but not to pay for it, instead proposing that all costs be met from royal revenues.

While thus outlining the campaign against the huguenots, the catholic lords attempted to prevent any royal endeavor of a similar nature against themselves. Demanding a written absolution for their recent disobediences, they asked Henry to declare that all transgressions had been committed "for his service and for the safeguarding of their religion" and thus were pleasing in his eyes. Lest the king prove less magnanimous in practice than in theory, the erstwhile rebels also requested that all individual Leaguers be confirmed in their offices and all cities that had supported the ultra-catholics be exempt from future royal garrisons. Yet these considerable concessions were a mere introduction to the essence of the League's self-protective policy, which was the matter of securities.

As the queen mother had feared, the princes proved to be "overly brazen plaintiffs."[142] Nearly half of the thirty-four articles involved demands for specific cities to be awarded League members as strongholds in case of huguenot (or royal) attack, and the prizes were not inconsiderable. The duke of Guise wanted Metz; the cardinal Bourbon, Rouen and Dieppe; the duke of Mayenne, Dijon plus either Beaune or Châlons-sur-Saône; the cardinal Guise, Rheims; the duke of Mercoeur, two towns in Brittany (which he would select) as well as fully admiralty powers over the province's coast; the duke of Aumale, the command of all League places in Picardy; the duke of Elbeuf, the government of Anjou. In addition to all of this, there were further demands on behalf of ten lesser figures. As if this were insufficient to insure League dominance, the catholic leaders requested that all towns presently in their hands, but not mentioned as securities, remain under their control until the king's edict had been executed completely; furthermore, as royal offices fell vacant, they were to be given to members of the League.[143] The risks of rebellion ran high, and Guise's faction could not afford a reconciliation unless they held the upper hand.

Confronted with this list of extortions, Catherine sent them on to the king with a personal promise "to reduce them . . ., if it is possible, to something reasonable,"[144] yet the elderly queen's determination could not mask the weakness of the royal bargaining position. Without the additional argument of arms, moral suasion was unlikely to convince Guise to return to obedience; and despite encouraging reports concerning a Swiss levy,[145] the queen mother was disappointed with Henry's lack of forces.[146] In contrast, by mid-May the ultra-catholics claimed an impressive number of troops, soon to be augmented by the arrival of 8,000 German mercenaries.[147] They held positions of strength throughout the country: the important cities of Orléans, Tours, Angers, Bourges, Nantes, and Lyons were under League control, as were most of Picardy, Champagne, and Burgundy, with areas of support in Auvergne and Provence.[148] Although Catherine managed to extend the illusory truce for another week,[149] no one seemed to take it very seriously, as Guise himself left negotiations for a few days in order to lead a successful assault upon Toul.[150] After its fall, the preservation of Metz became even more important, and reinforcements were sent out and the citadel strengthened under the queen's urgings.[151] Yet these precautions did not calm Catherine's fears that a League attack would succeed in giving the rebels an unchallenged dominance in northeast France which would threaten even her personal safety.[152] In her eyes, peace with the ultra-catholics was the only answer.

And so Catherine impatiently awaited her son's reply to the thirty-four articles to give her an indication of how she was expected to bargain with the League. However, in the interval the duke of Guise found a new grievance with which he threatened to disrupt negotiations: he had heard that the king's Swiss troops were preparing to enter France, in violation (claimed Guise) of the terms of the cease-fire.[153] In vain the queen argued that the Swiss were not covered by the treaty; the duke insisted that if they crossed the border he would consider the truce nullified, and would send for his German mercenaries to go to the aid of his brother and cousins.[154] With this ominous warning Guise retired from Châlons to assemble his troops near Verdun, where he issued a demand that the king halt the Swiss outside France.[155]

The duke's exaggerated anxiety probably had arisen from an apparent resurgence in royalist hopes. Metz continued to withstand League pressure;[156] the king's supporters in Normandy and Brittany were raising money and troops to oppose the ultra-catholic duke of Mercoeur;[157] opposition was growing to the duke of Aumale's rampages in Picardy;[158] the powerful duke of Montmorency seemed about to come to terms with the king;[159] Henry was massing troop strength near Paris.[160] However, the news that was most heartening (or disheartening, depending upon point of view) came from the Orléanais region: when both royal and League forces attempted to relieve the huguenot-held town of Gien, the king's troops won out over both calvinists and catholics to retake the prize for the monarchy.[161] These scattered indications of anti-League strength created the awareness that an ultra-catholic triumph was not inevitable if Henry would only take decisive action; or, as the English ambassador optimistically observed: "If the King would go roundly to work, that men might be out of doubt of his intention, [the Leaguers] were in great danger to repent the enterprise of this action."[162] Little wonder that Guise was said to have turned grey with worry.[163]

Yet, locked in his indecision, Henry gave no clues as to the course he would follow. Naturally, by this time most rumours gave strong odds favouring a settlement with the League,[164] a denouement deemed sufficiently probable despite the king's earlier promises of protection to the huguenots that Navarre began to arm openly in anticipation of renewed religious conflicts.[165] Other observers formed opposing conclusions. Acknowledging Henry's undisguised hatred for the Guises, his cherished dignity offended by rebellion (regardless of the excuses offered), and his tortuous subtlety of mind, they suggested that the king's dealings with the League were meant only to gain time. Once his Swiss had arrived and all troops were assembled, Henry would decry the ultra-catholic duplicity; and, "showing himself ready to march against them, as attempters against his estate and as hypocrites under the colour of religion,"[166] he would destroy them. It was not an impossible scenario, except for the casting of the central character.

While pundits speculated and Henry procrastinated, Guise moved to maintain the upper hand. Having left the queen mother with a veiled threat of his intention to march on Paris,[167] the duke in no way allayed the fear by continuing to concentrate his troops in apparent preparation for some venture. Rumours spreading throughout the ranks that the capital was to be their destination[168] reached Catherine's ear simultaneously with reports from Paris of a conspiracy against the king's life.[169] Warning her son to take great care "especially around your person,"[170] the queen tried desperately to avert some calamity by resuming negotiations, but Guise prolonged his absence while sending word of his adamant opposition to the entry of the king's Swiss.[171] Sensing an impasse that would be to the League's advantage, Catherine finally advised Henry to humour the duke, arguing that the Swiss would not be ready to cross the border for another week, by which time either an agreement would have been reached or the formal truce would have expired.[172] A few days later she repeated this counsel, now reinforced by a definite promise from the ultra-catholics that if the king did not agree, he would see their German mercenaries marching towards his capital.[173] Faced with this uninviting prospect, Henry again capitulated,[174] and an exultant Guise wrote, "Our affairs keep going better and better, and at all times show God to favour the justice of our cause."[175]

Encouraged by his deity's support and his king's spinelessness, the catholic duke returned to Épernay boasting that the League would recruit all catholics from the king's Swiss levy, which he claimed was already split by tensions between heretics and believers.[176] It was an inauspicious opening to another round of talks. The queen mother had received Henry's reply to the League articles in which he admitted privately that if the ultra-catholics insisted upon securities, some towns would have to be granted, but he hoped that their number would be as small as possible.[177] With this major concession, the negotiations degenerated into a haggling match. Catherine initiated proceedings on a conciliatory note, deleting some parts from the king's instructions "to put in other milder words, in order not to startle [the Leaguers]",[178] but all of the queen's soft answers could not turn away the ultra-catholics' wrath at the apparent lack of provision for their guarantees. As the arguments waxed fiercer, the king's emissary attempted to help the royal cause by inquiring of Guise's party why they now asked for securities when four months earlier they had not; the Leaguers' unanimous fury at this question finally resigned Catherine to asking what guarantees they did want. Leaping at this sign of surrender, the catholics mentioned Metz--"of which I wanted to remove all hope from them"--and then moved on to all other securities, the queen mother making "the smallest offers that were possible for me."[179] Thus began the bartering for control of France. The catholic leaders were determined to drive the price tag for their nominal obedience as high as possible, while Catherine fought to minimize their gains lest the king be left so weakened that the monarchy would be at the mercy of the League.

This atmosphere of demand and counter-offer prevailed for the next few days, until Guise and the cardinal Bourbon informed the queen mother that as they were not authorized by their colleagues to accept anything less than the original articles, they were leaving negotiations until they could receive further instructions.[180] Infuriated by this latest ploy, Catherine herself threatened to break off all talks, until the usually quiescent duke of Lorraine managed to convince both sides to resume their attempts at settlement.[181] The verbal struggle continued: now, in addition to their securities, the Leaguers demanded some provision by which huguenots would be stripped of their property, as well as the right for the ultra-catholics to levy their own Swiss mercenaries without express royal permission.[182] Noncommital on the former but vehemently opposed to the latter, the queen mother also rejected claims that all Leaguers who had taken towns should be confirmed in their de facto posts, for "it is more than reasonable that those who did not adhere to their party and remained steadfast in [the king's] service should be maintained in their offices."[183] As for the major stumbling block of securities, Catherine found she could do little to decrease "their insufferable demands" and bitterly wrote the king, "they want to divide the kingdom with you, and neither myself, nor one of those of your council, will ever advise you to do it."[184]

The little progress that had been made in reducing League demands was evident in a new list of articles that catholic leaders sent to the king.[185] Now religion appeared almost as an afterthought, mentioned only in a request that the anti-huguenot edict be formulated in accordance with previous League declarations, while the balance of the document was devoted to the physical safeguarding of ultra-catholic interests. Although some minor officials had been dropped from the list of compulsory benefits, the main dignitaries simply repeated their earlier demands (except for the duke of Elbeuf, who now asked for the government of all League places in Dauphiné instead of the government of Anjou.) Any royal bluff had failed; the League was holding firm.

Such were the discouraging tidings for the king of France. Already exhausted by the turbulence of the past months, Henry was now an uneasy mixture of frustration, anger, indecision, and boredom. Enmeshed within his own shortcomings, he retreated further and further under League pressure and yet preserved some vague hope of ultimate triumph, an idea so disconnected from reality that it might be termed a vision rather than any rational scheme. In a letter to his ambassador at Venice,[186] the king admitted that in his great desire to pacify his country he had agreed to many of the League's conditions, but now it seemed the rebels wished to control "the best cities and provinces in my kingdom, under the pretext of their 'securities.'" If such were the case, Henry declared, "I have deliberated defending myself as much as possible, preferring to risk the principle than to despoil myself under the pretext of peace." Appealing to the Venetians' traditional anti-Habsburg sentiment, the French king offered the grandiose possibility of war against the Spanish monarch and his associates, "rather than suffer that under the mask of friendship he should ruin my State, as he is doing very maliciously by means of silver;" but to preserve his kingdom and to prevent Spanish aggrandizement, Henry would need help--chiefly money, "for that is what I lack the most." Thus the letter could be interpreted as a mere appeal for funds, but behind the bravado and empty rhetoric lurked the vengeful pride and determination which, if shrouded by indecision at the moment, augured disaster for the League in future.

At the moment, however, the ultra-catholics seemed in little danger, as the king showed no inclination to deviate from his recent pattern of continual concessions. Yet, finding his latest proposals still inadequate, in disgust the rebel princes left Épernay to join their troops while reports spread of their intention to march upon Paris.[187] Confronted with this dangerous prospect, the dispirited queen mother abandoned all hopes of peace, complaining that "whatever I did, I could gain nothing"[188] --an assessment that was confirmed by the League's presentation of their "dernière resolution." Virtually demanding that the king proclaim an edict against the huguenots and then entrust its execution to the League, the catholic princes made the innovative promise that, in return, they would "retire to their houses to finish their days in private life."[189] The glaring contradiction between the latter offer and their request to lead the king's armies prevented either the queen mother or the king from considering the proposition seriously, but it served to place additional pressure upon Henry to concede to League demands: now the ultra-catholics could publicize the disingenuous document as proof of their lack of self-interest.[190]

Surprised by this public relations coup, shocked by Catherine's discouragement, and frightened by League troop movements, the king quickly dispatched a messenger to make a more tempting offer to the rebels, whom he hoped to entice back to negotiations by sending Villeroy, one of his most important councillors, to assist the elderly queen.[191] Despite Henry's obvious determination to pacify the League, his mother thought the latest proposals still inadequate to accomplish this end, and advised the king to increase the provisions before the rebel leaders succeeded in cutting off the entry of the royal Swiss levies.[192] Nevertheless, perhaps reassured by recent victorious skirmishes against League forces in Poitou,[193] Henry preferred to await the ultra-catholics' reaction before offering any further surrender of sovereignty.

For once, the king's optimism was vindicated. When Guise and the cardinal Bourbon arrived at Épernay, they declared themselves satisfied (if not delighted) with the latest royal bribes, and on 20 June 1585 the weary queen mother could report happily: "Thanks to God, this afternoon we have done . . . a good work, for we have come to an agreement for peace."[194] When Henry received news of the settlement, he attended celebrations in the place de Grève "wearing a joyful face,"[195] despite the fact, as L'Estoile acidly remarked, that the king "yet loved [the

League] as little as he did war.[196] For the moment, Henry forgot his personal hatreds; the cataclysm was averted, or at least postponed.

However, the disputes were not over yet. Even as Catherine moved to Nemours in preparation for the formal signing, she became involved in a new argument with the ultra-catholic leader. By the terms of the temporary accord Guise had agreed to halt League recruitment in Switzerland, but when his message conveniently arrived too late to countermand the levy,[197] the duke was predictably reluctant to dismiss his new 8,000 soldiers. Claiming that the League's troops were all good catholics while the king's levy was composed of calvinists and adventurers, Guise proposed with great ingenuousness that "for this occasion, it would be good to send back [Henry's Swiss] and use [the League's], who are catholics."[198] As this suggestion seemed ridiculously dangerous to the weary queen mother, the controversy continued until the League agreed not to use their Swiss if the king would help defray the cost of the levy.[199] Finally, for the sake of expediency a decision on this matter was deferred until after the official signing of the peace treaty on 7 July in the town of Nemours. It was, nominally, an occasion for rejoicing, yet the ominous fragility of the new alliance was foreshadowed in the fact that the cosignors met again that afternoon to work out arrangements for the separation of their respective forces in order to prevent bloodshed.[200]

Henry had achieved his peace, but at what cost?

The treaty of Nemours is usually condemned as a supreme surrender of the last Valois _roi-fainéant_, and, in many ways, this harsh appraisal seems justified.[201] Certainly the king's role in shaping the document was negligible: openly League-inspired, nearly all provisions were meant for the immediate or ultimate benefit of the ultra-catholics. Yet if Henry had failed to halt the League offensive, he had succeeded in weakening its thrust: the bitter defeat was eased by a few minor victories.

Fulfilling the king's first promise to the League and following the conventional pattern of such legislation, the treaty[202] began with the proclamation of a "perpetual and irrevocable edict" against the practice of any religion other than the catholic, apostolic, and Roman faith. To effect this spiritual homogeneity, all calvinist ministers were to leave France within one month of the edict's publication in parlement, and all subjects were to profess the catholic religion within six months, the latter extended time at the king's insistence. Henry had also modified the Leaguers' proposed punishments: should any huguenot reject conversion, he was to suffer exile, not death, and first would be allowed to dispose of his goods. However, the ultra-catholics triumphed in decreeing that a heretic could refuse exile only "under penalty of seizure of life and property," thus ensuring the militants of both bloodshed and booty. In a further demonstration of strength, Guise and his faction had won a specific declaration intended against the king of Navarre that all non-catholics, regardless of rank, were incapable of holding "benefices, public office, . . . estates, and high positions," while the ultra-catholics also insisted that all cities awarded the huguenots as securities were to be freed immediately. The Leaguers even made provision for the edict's enforcement; it was to be registered by all parlements without modification, and its execution was to be sworn by all princes and royal office-holders, including local officials.

The rest of the treaty was devoted to the protection of the League in general and to the well-being of its leaders in particular. Demanding complete absolution from past anti-monarchical sins, the ultra-catholics drafted a comprehensive list of transgressions to which the king reluctantly gave his sanction:

> having recognized what has been done by the princes, officers of the crown, prelates, lords, and other of his officers, cities, and communities, and by all those who followed, aided, and favoured them in these recent agitations and disturbances, in as much as in the capture of weapons, cities, fortresses, funds from his general and particular revenues . . ., provisions, manufacture and taking of artillery, powder, and cannonballs, and other munitions of war, dealings with and levies of men of war, ransomings, acts of hostility, and generally all that was done, waged, and negotiated up to now within and without the kingdom for reason of the above, even though it is not specially expressed and specified; has been for the zeal and affection that they have for the maintenance and preservation of the catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion, His Majesty finds it agreeable, approves it, and desires that they be acquitted of all . . ., without being able to be blamed in the future.

In addition to this humiliating admission of powerlessness, Henry was forced to promise that any criminal judgments made against ultra-catholics because of their recent activities would be nullified, all royal officeholders who followed the League would be maintained in their responsibilities, and all cities that declared for the rebels would be left in their usual state, without the installation of any royal garrisons. By these provisions the Leaguers compelled the king to bestow his official blessing upon acts of treason while giving the erstwhile rebels comprehensive legal safeguards against royal retribution.

Yet, as Guise had just demonstrated, legality meant little against an army; and, in full appreciation of such harsh realities, the princes insisted upon more tangible forms of protection. Again, Henry unwillingly made a potentially disastrous concession but managed to reduce its impact in several minor ways: although forced to award various cities as guarantees to the catholic leaders, the king whittled down their original demands to a more tolerable level. Failing to win the much desired Metz either on the battlefield or at the bargaining table, the duke of Guise had to content himself with retaining Toul and Verdun, as well as St. Dizier and Châlons-sur-Marne; the cardinal Bourbon gained not Rouen and Dieppe, but Soissons; Mayenne kept Dijon and Beaune, as he had wished; Mercoeur was awarded the relatively insignificant Dinan and le Conquet, instead of St. Malo and Nantes; Aumale had named six towns in Picardy for himself, but received only one; Elbeuf was given not the command of League cities in Dauphiné, but the government of the small province of Bourbonnais; the cardinal Guise gained no real estate at all. However, as compensation for any disappointments in the distribution of securities, each of the seven catholic princes was to be given a personal guard of honour, maintained at the king's expense. In effect, Henry rewarded his nobles for past disobediences and subsidized their capacity to commit future acts of hostility, but in so doing he kept some important towns out of their hands.

Royal assumption of further financial obligations also solved the problem of Guise's mercenaries. By promising to reimburse the League for all expenditures resulting from foreign levies, the king succeeded in ordering the German troops to withdraw from the French countryside. While the infantry was to be dismissed outright, the cavalry was to remain on the border at the king's expense for use against possible huguenot-led forces; however, first the soldiers had to swear an oath of loyalty to Henry which would supersede all previous pledges to the catholic princes. Once more, the king had modified some League demands but at considerable expense; peace was proving as costly as war.

In return for these immense gains, the League relinquished very little. One article of the treaty bound the ultra-catholics to return their _villes de seureté_ to the king in five years "without delay, excuse, or tardiness"--a slight improvement over their original promise to give up the guarantees when they judged the anti-calvinist edict to be executed completely, but in essence still a meaningless pledge without a large royal army to enforce it. Another provision verging upon fantasy involved the princes' promise to quit all "leagues and associations within and without the kingdom;" however, it did satisfy Henry's need for some sort of moral sanction which he could apply against Guise's ties with Spain. The Leaguers were not even required to swear obedience to the king nor to recognize him as leader of the new religious crusade; the latter was taken as understood (in theory if never in practice), and the former was considered irrelevant for, according to the earlier articles of absolution, the ultra-catholics had never been guilty of disobedience. Certainly, the settlement made rebellion profitable for the League.

Yet, in his erratic way, Henry did win a few victories. Although the lack of a direct catholic heir to the throne had stimulated the

League's very existence, the treaty made no specific mention of the succession: despite his fatuous wish to be addressed as "Monsieur," the cardinal Bourbon had not gained recognition as the heir apparent. Supposedly, as a calvinist Navarre was deprived of his rights, but his status was unassailable should he convert; moreover, it could be argued that "offices, estats, et dignitez" did not pertain to the rights of kingship, which were beyond such mundane regulation. Through a combination of ambiguity and determination, Henry had staved off the ultra-catholic attempt to tamper with the fundamental laws of his kingdom. In addition, the crown's final settlement with the rebels also destroyed the League's credibility as a movement for social reform, for Guise had failed to alleviate taxation, to call a new session of the Estates General, or even to weaken (let alone dislodge) the two royal favourites. In this sense, the peace of Nemours stripped the League of its pretensions to reveal its essence as a vehicle for princely greed tempered with genuine religious convictions. Generally, the king's successes represented nebulous possibilities rather than comforting actualities; instead of giving up great tracts of land, he had offered the Leaguers promises of massive financial support (from which he hoped to extricate himself later), and he had gained a further six months in which to manoeuvre. To say that the situation might have been worse is to damn with faint praise, but this seems the fairest assessment of Henry's agreement with the League.

Peace had not come cheaply to the unhappy monarch. His sheer physical losses were enormous, for several important towns had passed out of his control, and the depleted royal treasury would be drained by his financial commitments; yet these tangible privations were insignificant compared to the broader defeat that they symbolized. By accepting League demands, Henry extended recognition and even material aid to a powerful faction that obviously would obey the king only insofar as he moved to effect policies which the ultra-catholics would define. Essentially anti-monarchical in sentiment, the Leaguers had won their position through insurrection; while purportedly serving a higher authority than a mere terrestrial sovereign, they seemed to confuse their deity's voice with that of their war-lord, the duke of Guise. Intimidation and political blackmail had served the ambitious duke well, and would do so again during the next three years. Henry had obtained his peace, but by its terms he was to share his kingdom with a charismatic figure who was already treated as a demi-dieu by a worshipful catholic populace.

The first confrontation had ended in a formal alliance between king and duke, but it was to be an uneasy partnership which the resentful Henry would consider less and less supportable as time went by.

CHAPTER I: FOOTNOTES

[1] The atmosphere at the French court in the spring of 1585 is best conveyed in the many reports of Stafford, the English ambassador, found in CSPF, XIX.

[2] Later propaganda was to claim that Guise formed the League after learning that his king was allied with Elizabeth of England and Henry of Navarre in a plot to exterminate all catholics. *La Vie et faits notables de Henry de Valois*, *Archives curiuses de l'histoire de France depuis Louis XI jusqu'à Louis XVIII*, ed. by M. L. Cimber and F. Danjou (27 vols.; Paris: Beauvais, 1834-1840), 1st ser., XII, 465. Collection cited hereafter as Arch. cur.

[3] Stafford to Walsingham, 22 Feb. 1585, CSPF, XIX, 276.

[4] L'Estoile, 375; Estienne Pasquier, *Lettres historiques pour les années 1556-1594* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1966), 251. Cited hereafter as Pasquier.

[5] Mendoza to Parma, 27 Feb. 1585, CSPF, XIX, 287.

[6] Pasquier, 252.

[7] L'Estoile, 375.

[8] Stafford to Walsingham, 20 March 1585, CSPF, XIX, 311.

[9] Derby and Stafford to Walsingham, 13 March 1585, CSPF, XIX, 316.

[10] L'Estoile, 375.

[11] Jensen, 66-67.

[12] L'Estoile, 375.

[13] Pasquier, 254; Stafford to Walsingham, 20 March 1585, CSPF, XIX, 341.

[14] The date of the discovery is given variously as 12 March (L'Estoile, 376), the 14th (Busini to Vinta, 29 March 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 552), and the 16th (Stafford to Walsingham, 20 March 1585, CSPF, XIX, 339). L'Estoile reported the cache as 700 harquebus and 250 corselets (L'Estoile 376); Busini gave a more enthusiastic estimate of 1,200 harquebus, 300 corselets, and 300 pikes (Negs. Toscane, IV, 552).

[15] Stafford to Walsingham, 20 March 1585, CSPF, XIX, 340.

[16] Busini to Vinta, 29 March 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 552-553; Stafford to Walsingham, 20 March 1585, CSPF, XIX, 339-340.

[17] Stafford to Walsingham, 20 March 1585, CSPF, XIX, 340.

[18] *Ibid.*; Busini to Vinta, 29 March 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 553.

[19] Catherine de Medici to Guise, 16 March 1585, Lettres, VIII, 242.

[20] *Ibid.*, 242-243.

[21] Jensen, 67n.

[22] Stafford to Walsingham, 20 March 1585, CSPF, XIX, 341.

[23] Aubigné, VI, 199; Jean de Serres, *Generall Historie of France, to 1598*, trans. by E. Grimeston (London: George Eld, 1611), 832. Cited hereafter as Serres.

[24] Stafford to Walsingham, 22 March 1585, CSPF, XIX, 349.

[25] Stafford to Walsingham, 24 March 1585, CSPF, XIX, 354-355.

[26] L'Estoile, 376.

[27] Stafford to Walsingham, 24 March 1585, CSPF, XIX, 355.

[28] Stafford to Walsingham, 29 March 1585, CSPF, XIX, 362.

[29] Charles de Valois, ed., *Histoire de la Ligue: Oeuvre inédite d'un contemporain* (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1914), 131. Cited hereafter as Valois.

[30] Paul Robiquet, Paris et la Ligue sous le règne de Henri III (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1886), 210-211. Cited hereafter as Robiquet.

[31] Stafford to Walsingham, 29 March 1585, CSPF, XIX, 362.

[32] Valois, 197.

[33] L'Estoile, 377.

[34] *Ibid*.

[35] Stafford to Walsingham, 5 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 378.

[36] Stafford to Walsingham, 29 March 1585, CSPF, XIX, 363.

[37] Aubigné, VI, 194.

[38] René de Lucinge, Lettres sur les débuts de la Ligue (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1964), 34. Cited hereafter as Lucinge, Débuts.

[39] Stafford to Walsingham, 29 March 1585, CSPF, XIX, 361.

[40] Aubigné, VI, 199; Cavriana to Vinta, 2 April 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 607.

[41] Villeroy to Maisse, 30 April 1585, Negs. Levant, IV, 336.

[42] Stafford to Walsingham, 24 March 1585, CSPF, XIX, 354: "standing upon his assurance of his greatness."

[43] Lucinge, Débuts, 24.

[44] Stafford to Walsingham, 24 January 1585, CSPF, XIX, 238.

[45] Busini to Vinta, 22 January 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 545.

[46] L'Estoile, 332.

[47] Cavriana to Vinta, 20 March 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 605; Louis Maimbourg, The History of the League, trans. by John Dryden (London: M. Flesher, 1684), 107. Cited hereafter as Maimbourg.

[48] Aubigné, VI, 199.

[49] Déclaration des causes qui ont meu Mgr le cardinal de Bourbon, et les princes, pairs, prélats, seigneurs, villes et communautez catholiques de ce royaume de France, de s'opposer à ceux qui veulent subvertir la religion catholique et l'Estat, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 10-13.

[50] This is the date given on the document; however, Baguenault de Puchesse claims that the actual printing took place on 19 March 1585, and that the manifest was already in circulation throughout the Midi before its official release (Lettres, VIII, 242n). This view is substantiated by Henry of Navarre's reference to the manifest in a letter dated 25 March 1585, in Henry IV, Recueil des lettres missives (9 vols.; Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1843-1876), II, 20-21; cited hereafter as Lettres missives.

[51] Lucinge, Débuts, 43; Cavriana to Vinta, 2 April 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 607.

[52] Cavriana to Vinta, 11 April 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 609.

[53] Henry of Navarre to Henry III, mid-March 1585, Lettres missives, II, 19-20; Busini to Vinta, 29 March 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 552-553.

[54] Philippe de Mornay, seigneur duPlessis-Marly, Mémoires et Correspondances (12 vols.; Paris: Chez Treuttel et Wuertz, 1824-1825): Henry of Navarre to Henry III, III, 12. Cited hereafter as Mornay.

[55] Aubigné, VI, 237.

[56] Henry of Navarre to Henry III, 1 April 1585, Lettres missives, II, 28.

[57] Henry of Navarre to Ségur, 25 March 1585, Lettres missives, II, 21.

[58] Stafford to Walsingham, 20 March 1585, CSPF, XIX, 341.

[59] Aubigné, VI, 204.

[60] Stafford to Walsingham, 20 March 1585, CSPF, XIX, 341.

[61] Busini to Vinta, 16 April 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 560.

[62] Aubigné, VI, 204-205.

[63] Stafford to Walsingham, 5 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 379.

[64] Aubigné, VI, 205.

[65] *Ibid.*, 242-243.

[66] Nicolas de Neufville, sieur de Villeroy, *Mémoires d'Estat*, Petitot, 1st ser., XLIV, 37. Cited hereafter as Villeroy.

[67] Davila, 256.

[68] Villeroy, Petitot, 1st ser., XLIV, 37-38.

[69] Stafford to Walsingham, 5 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 379.

[70] Stafford to Walsingham, 2 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 372.

[71] Henry of Navarre to Henry III, April 1585, Mornay, III, 13.

[72] Henry of Navarre to Chassincourt, April 1585, Mornay, III, 14.

[73] Henry III to Henry of Navarre, April 1585, Lettres missives, II, 38n.

[74] Henry of Navarre to Henry III, 13 April 1585, Lettres missives, II, 39.

[75] Lucinge, Débuts, 27.

[76] Maimbourg, 120.

[77] Davila, 258.

[78] Bellièvre to Catherine de Medici, 18 April 1585, Lettres, VIII, 434-435.

[79] Palma-Cayet, Petitot, 1st ser., XXXVIII, 266.

[80] Henry III to Maisse, 4 April 1585, Negs. Levant, IV, 360.

[81] Stafford to Walsingham, 20 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 410.

[82] *Ibid.*, 408.

[83] Cavriana to Vinta, 2 April 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 607; Lucinge, Débuts, 43.

[84] Stafford to Walsingham, 5 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 379.

[85] *Ibid.*, 380.

[86] Stafford to Walsingham, 2 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 371.

[87] L'Estoile, 377.

[88] Stafford to Walsingham, 11 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 389.

[89] Busini to Vinta, 16 April 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 512.

[90] L'Estoile, 377.

[91] Henry III to Maisse, 4 April 1585, Negs. Levant, IV, 362.

[92] Stafford to Walsingham, 11 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 389.

[93] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 9 April 1585, Lettres, VIII, 247.

[94] Stafford to Walsingham, 11 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 389.

[95] Waad to Walsingham, 5 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 381.

[96] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 9 April 1585, Lettres, VIII, 245.

[97] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 10 April 1585, Lettres, VIII, 247.

[98] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 9 April 1585, Lettres, VIII, 246-247.

[99] Stafford to Walsingham, 11 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 389.

[100] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 13 April 1585, Lettres, VIII, 249.

[101] Stafford to Walsingham, 29 March 1585, CSPF, XIX, 361-362.

[102] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 14 April 1585, Lettres, VIII, 250.

[103] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 19 April 1585, Lettres, VIII, 259.

[104] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 24 April 1585, Lettres, VIII, 260.

[105] Stafford to Walsingham, 5 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 379.

[106] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 13 April 1585, Lettres, VIII, 248.

[107] Stafford to Walsingham, 11 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 389.

[108] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 13 April 1585, Lettres, VIII, 249.

[109] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 14 April 1585, Lettres, VIII, 251.

[110] Bellièvre to Catherine de Medici, 3 April 1585, Lettres, VIII, 431.

[111] The declaration is quoted in detail in Davila, 267-271.

[112] Maimbourg, 117.

[113] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 16 April 1585, Lettres, VIII, 255.

[114] Maimbourg, 114-115.

[115] Stafford to Walsingham, 11 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 389.

[116] Stafford to Walsingham, 20 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 412.

[117] Bellièvre to Catherine de Medici, 7 April 1585, Lettres, VIII, 432-433.

[118] Bellièvre to Catherine de Medici, 15 April 1585, Lettres, VIII, 433.

[119] Jensen, 68.

[120] Cavriana to Vinta, 11 April 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 609.

[121] Stafford to Walsingham, 20 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 409.

[122] L'Estoile 379; Busini to Vinta, 30 April 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 567.

[123] L'Estoile, 379.

[124] Lettres escrittes de Marseille, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 45.

[125] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 25 April 1585, Lettres, VIII, 263-264.

[126] Stafford to Walsingham, 20 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 409.

[127] Pinart to Henry III, 22 April 1585, Lettres, VIII, 455.

[128] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 25 April 1585, Lettres, VIII, 263.

[129] Lucinge, Débuts, 72.

[130] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 30 April 1585, Lettres, VIII, 269-270.

[131] Catherine de Medici, Mémoire pour Miron, 30 April 1585, Lettres, VIII, 268.

[132] Henry III, Mémoire bailée à Miron, 3 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 465-467.

[133] *Ibid.*, 467.

[134] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 5 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 276.

[135] Henry III to Catherine de Medici, May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 457-458.

[136] Stafford to Walsingham, 27 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 423.

[137] This conference is described at length in Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 7 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 278-280.

[138] Mémoire, et articles de la conférence tenue à Sarry, 12 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 468.

[139] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 12 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 284.

[140] Catherine de Medici to Brulart, 14 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 285.

[141] Articles presentés au roi, Lettres, VIII, 459-464.

[142] Catherine de Medici to Brulart, 14 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 285.

[143] Articles presentés au roi, Lettres, VIII, 462-464.

[144] Catherine de Medici to Brulart, 14 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 285.

[145] Catherine de Medici to Brulart, 15 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 286.

[146] Catherine de Medici to Brulart, 4 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 272.

[147] Mémoire de la conférence tenue à Sarry, 12 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 468.

[148] Busini to Vinta, 13 May 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 573.

[149] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 16 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 286.

[150] Catherine de Medici to Brulart, 8 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 281.

[151] *Ibid*.

[152] Catherine de Medici to Brulart, 14 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 285.

[153] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 16 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 286.

[154] *Ibid*., 286-287.

[155] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 22 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 293-294.

[156] Catherine de Medici to Viart, 19 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 289.

[157] Busini to Vinta, 28 May 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 576.

[158] L'Estoile, 381.

[159] Busini to Vinta, 28 May 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 576.

[160] Stafford to Burghley, 14 May 1585, CSPF, XIX, 461.

[161] L'Estoile, 380-381.

[162] Stafford to Walsingham, 14 May 1585, CSPF, XIX, 461.

[163] Lucinge, Débuts, 96.

[164] Ibid., 87; Cavriana to Vinta, 27 May 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 611.

[165] Henry of Navarre to Henry III, 17 May 1585, Lettres missives, II, 63-64.

[166] Stafford to Walsingham, 14 May 1585, CSPF, XIX, 462.

[167] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 16 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 288.

[168] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 21 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 290.

[169] L'Estoile, 380; Catherine de Medici to Brulart, 18 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 288.

[170] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 21 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 290.

[171] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 22 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 293.

[172] Ibid., 294.

[173] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 25 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 297.

[174] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 27 May 1585, Lettres VIII, 298.

[175] Guise to duchess of Nevers, n. d., Lettres, VIII, 298n.

[176] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 29 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 302.

[177] Henry III, Mémoire pour Villequier, 19 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 296n.

[178] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 29 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 303.

[179] *Ibid*., 304-305.

[180] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 30 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 306.

[181] *Ibid*.

[182] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 1 June 1585, Lettres, VIII, 309-310.

[183] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 30 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 307.

[184] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 1 June 1585, Lettres, VIII, 310.

[185] Articles apportez par Miron, 2 June 1585, Lettres, VIII, 474-475.

[186] Henry III to Maisse, 26 May 1585, Negs. Levant, IV, 368-371.

[187] Catherine de Medici to Brulart, 7 June 1585, Lettres, VIII, 313.

[188] Catherine de Medici to Bellièvre, 8 June 1585, Lettres, VIII, 314.

[189] Mémoires de Nevers, I, 681, quoted in Robiquet, 215.

[190] Davila, 275.

[191] Catherine de Medici to Brulart, 14 June 1585, Lettres, VIII, 318.

[192] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 16 June 1585, Lettres, VIII, 320-321.

[193] L'Estoile, 382.

[194] Catherine de Medici to Brulart, 20 June 1585, Lettres, VIII, 325.

[195] L'Estoile, 383.

[196] Ibid.

[197] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 30 June 1585, Lettres, VIII, 329.

[198] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 1 July 1585, Lettres, VIII, 333.

[199] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 3 July 1585, Lettres, VIII, 336.

[200] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 7 July 1585, Lettres, VIII, 339.

[201] Mariéjol, for example, states that by the treaty the League "imposed its leaders, its programmes, and its soldiers" upon the king. Lavisse, VI, pt. 1, 248.

[202] The edict is printed in full in Dumont, V, pt. 1, 453-454.

CHAPTER II

RELUCTANT ALLIANCE, AUGUST 1585-MAY 1588

For nearly three years after August of 1585, the Treaty of Nemours was to define the official relationship between Henry III and the League. By the terms which had been hammered out with so much difficulty, an ultra-catholic faction strengthened by royal concessions was to ally with the French king in a campaign to eradicate heresy within the realm. However, as this crusade was clearly a League policy which had been forced upon the king, it is unsurprising that Henry was to expend most of his energy in the next few years in attempts to avoid fulfilling the treaty's provisions. By working for Navarre's conversion to catholicism, by delaying and pleading penury, eventually by pitting calvinist and ultra-catholic against each other, Henry sought to reverse the ignominy of an agreement which made the duke of Guise the pre-eminent political figure in France.

Yet as Guise's star rose, Henry's fell ever lower. Long suspect to his subjects because of his lack of application to duty and his flagrantly decadent eccentricities, once more the king had acquitted himself with little honour in the public's eyes. The Leaguers despised him for bowing to them so easily; the huguenots denounced him for breaking his recent oaths of support; the non-League catholics condemned him for both reasons, as well as for his failure to appreciate their existence and organize their support. Distrusted by all sides, Henry was contributing to his own isolation and impotence, and Valois prestige was hitting bottom.

Perhaps the saddest aspect of Henry's humiliation lay in the fact that his treaty of pacification had condemned his country to further civil war. Indeed, the king's own behaviour had steadily reduced the alternatives to a tacit royal surrender, for his continual preference for a passive role, combined with his unrealistic wish to reconcile the League to the crown without violence, had prevented him from taking a decisive stand against the ultra-catholics. Failing even to refute the Leaguers' claim to be not rebels but defenders of the faith, Henry projected an image of fumbling uncertainty that lost him the supporters that a show of determined self-confidence might have won. In addition, he neglected to send explicit instructions to all royal office-holders, an omission that allowed many towns to fall under League control or to slip into a watchful neutrality that accepted garrisons from neither king nor insurgents.[1] Reluctant to take any action, Henry mobilized his resources slowly, and once he finally had assembled troops, he could not decide to use them.[2] Essentially, the king failed to realize that he had only two choices--to conquer or to submit--and his hesitation to attempt the former made the latter inevitable.

As king, Henry bore the ultimate responsibility for this ironic peace that meant "the renewing of an old war."[3] His inertia and indecision would cause many parts of his kingdom to suffer the immeasurable miseries of war, to pay for which other areas would experience severe financial oppression. Foreseeing this fate in March, the king had wanted to save his country from such destruction; by July he wanted only to save himself from annihilation. As his views had grown more self-centred, his own preservation became paramount, and in the end he considered Nemours a treaty of peace because it meant that the League would be fighting someone other than himself.

Yet Henry's near catatonic indecision rendered him an unsatisfactory scapegoat. Most observers horrified by the Treaty of Nemours saw the king as weak but not malicious, betrayed rather than betrayer, the pitiable object of dastardly manipulation who "little by little . . . hath been by their traitorous dealings, and by the fears that there have been put into him by them that have betrayed him, brought to consent to their wills."[4] As might be expected, the role of prime traitor was assigned to the little-loved queen mother, whose legendary Machiavellianism and prominence in negotiations made her the target of anti-League opprobrium.

Although it seems difficult to justify the accusation that Catherine de Medici deliberately sold out her son to the League, and in fact the sound advice and honest concern revealed in her letters contradicts any such idea, many contemporaries espoused this view with enthusiasm. The reasons alleged for her defection ranged from love for the duke of Lorraine's family[5] (who eventually might succeed to the throne if the Bourbons were barred), to hatred for her son's mignons,[6] to anger at her subsequent exclusion from power.[7] Yet the most popular explanation grew less from political analysis than from widespread suspicion of the queen as an ambitious power-broker who once again was playing a cynically tortuous game in hope of regaining personal supremacy; or, as the English ambassador described,

> there remaineth still in her the old accustomed humour to have sundry ways to the wood, and that therefore she will

> maintain the King, King of Navarre, (and) Duke of Guise, that it may be, they may all rely upon her and that one flinching from her the other two may still be strong enough to maintain her.[8]

A further variation of this theme suggested that Catherine exaggerated the League threat to the king so that Henry would be frightened into giving her full powers;[9] thereupon, she expected to subdue Guise's faction and thus win her son's undying gratitude.[10] In short, it was believed that whether or not the queen mother sincerely supported the ultra-catholics, she was determined to exploit their existence to her own advantage and to France's detriment.

Perhaps such vilification is comprehensible in light of Catherine's past activities, but it was unwarranted in the situation of 1585. Far from betraying Henry to the League, the queen mother sent her son a continuous stream of letters that alternately begged, cajoled, ordered, and nagged him to reinforce his cities and assemble his troops as soon as possible; moreover, despite age and illness, Catherine subjected herself to the exhausting series of negotiations with Guise and his party, haggling as best she could for more acceptable terms for the monarchy. Certainly, she never sought a rapprochement between king and Leaguers by portraying the rebels in sympathetic terms, for at best she described them as very unreasonable[11] and at worst as wickedly disrespectful.[12] As for the accusation that the queen was encouraging the ultra-catholics ultimately to enhance her own stature, even ambassador Stafford (who had little cause to trust the wily lady) commented sceptically to his English correspondent, "what likelihood there is for an old woman at her end for ambition to arm so tickle and strong subjects in her son's realm against him, I leave it for you to judge."[13]

Yet if Catherine cannot be castigated for a deliberate surrender to the League, neither should she be exempt from all blame for the disastrous settlement signed at Nemours. Although she urged Henry to build up his forces, such preparation was always for the purpose of gaining "a more advantageous peace;"[14] the queen did not appear ready to risk an actual military confrontation as an alternative to a costly pacification. While appreciating the harmful nature of all concessions to the League, Catherine seemed panic-stricken by the possibility of a catholic offensive against Paris, and to prevent this she was prepared to meet almost any of Guise's demands. It was an ironic contrast: over-awed by the League's reported strength, the normally resolute queen mother bowed to pressure, as her habitually weak-willed son still showed a determination to keep major prizes out of the ultra-catholics' grasp. In the end, Catherine seemed to follow the reasoning of many royalists: if the country were to divide into calvinist and catholic camps, the king could not hope to exist independently and thus had to ally himself with those who represented the vanguard of the catholic majority. The queen did not mislead her son intentionally, but she appears guilty of an error in judgment, for conciliation could prove as destructive to the monarchy as war.

Of course, Henry did not rely exclusively on his mother's advice, and others shared the decisions which led to the Treaty of Nemours. Prominent were the two notorious favourites, who formed the nucleus of Henry's self-conscious attempt to construct a king's party.

The duke of Joyeuse proved a disappointment in that his total self-absorption and avid dedication to frivolity precluded any serious attention to matters of state; moreover, he exhibited vaguely ultra-catholic predilections, probably the result of family ties with the house of Lorraine.[15] No such charge could be levelled against the duke of Épernon, whose outspoken hatred for the League and its leaders[16] led the English ambassador to surmise optimistically: "All the good that is in that man is that he is very vehement against them and their action; though it be not with the good mind that it should be, it may serve to a good effect."[17] The prophecy was not fulfilled, for, although normally of a less languorous temperament than either Joyeuse or his royal master, Épernon fell seriously ill during the spring and summer of 1585,[18] and what little energy he retained was devoted to a spirited (and successful) defence of Metz.[19] In addition, the royalist camp was split by the intense rivalry between the two mignons which now grew so bitter that one observer commented, "If [Henry] were my king, I would pray to God to help him, that leaveth all counsels to follow two only, and they not agreed, for their own ambitions."[20] However much Henry relied upon them, his two best friends gave him little help.

Perhaps the king's previous preference for the young dukes' advice had created an estrangement with the rest of his council, for there seemed a curious lack of communication even during this time of crisis. Although it is impossible to credit Aubigné's furious accusation that all royal advisors had been "won . . . by gifts from Spain,"[21] it cannot be denied that pro-League sympathies existed among certain members of the council: Villequier was the father-in-law of the young lieutenant who held the city of Caen for the ultra-catholics, and Cheverny also had fairly clear ties with Guise's party.[22] Yet such tendencies could not be attributed to the two most important councillors, Villeroy and Bellièvre, who also appeared to give ultimate support to a reconciliation with the League. Villeroy in particular defended this position, repeating the queen mother's argument that the monarchy could not hope to survive if alienated from the catholic majority, whose allegiance Guise apparently had won.[23] Evidently, none of the king's councillors was sufficiently in his confidence to persuade him to move with more determination; thus, lacking any innovative advice, Henry had followed the line of least resistance, which led directly to the Treaty of Nemours.

If the responsibility for this debacle might be termed collective, it fell to the king alone to carry out its provisions with some semblance of dignity. Accordingly, on 13 July 1585 at Saint-Maur-les-Fossés, he gave a gracious welcome "*à la courtisane*"[24] to the cardinal Bourbon and the three Guise brothers. Despite the apparent cordiality, it was noted that on their journey together into Paris "things went very coldly between Guise and Épernon, who could not hide his emotions."[25] While Henry's feelings doubtless approximated those of his favourite, he kept them under better control until 18 July, the day set for the publication of the anti-huguenot edict, when, en route to parlement with the League leaders, the king reportedly lamented that:

> he had made two edicts of pacification . . .; the one, in the year 1577, against his conscience, by which he had tolerated the practice of the new religion, but which was

> nevertheless very agreeable to him, as by this he had pursued the general tranquillity of all France; that presently he was going to have another published, in accordance with his conscience, but in which he took no pleasure, foreseeing that it would bring universal ruin to his State.[26]

Regardless of the king's personal reluctance, upon his exit from parlement he was greeted by a vast crowd of Parisians cheering "with such great vehemence and demonstrations of joy that they say has never been seen,"[27] which L'Estoile sourly discounted as a claque of "thieves and riff-raff . . . and very small children"[28] hired by the League for the occasion. Henry himself gave little indication of pleasure at the unusual reception, thus:

> giving matter to the Guisards to exclaim, that inwardly he favoured the Hugonots [sic], and that by meer [sic] force he was drawn against his own Genius, by the zeal and industry of the Lords of the House of Lorraine, to denounce War against them.[29]

The mutual suspicion foretold the conflicts of the coming months.

Despite L'Estoile's cynicism, the edict was received with widespread enthusiasm by the Parisian masses, who, thanks to League organization and propaganda, probably constituted the most fervent body of ultracatholics within France. Apparently failing to understand the implications of the new act, droves of people happily paraded to Nôtre-Dame de Paris chanting "We're going to hear the Te Deum of peace."[30]

No comforting delusions of peace existed for the huguenots, who were horrified by the breadth and vindictiveness of the new proclamation. Swearing that half of his moustache turned white with shock at the catastrophic news,[31] Henry of Navarre complained to his royal brother-in-law that despite the calvinists' fidelity, "peace has been made both without me and against me."[32] Yet, even after this betrayal, the diplomatic Navarre continued to direct all reprimands against the League, and not against the French king. Again stressing the similarity of royalist and calvinist interests, Navarre pointed out:

> What is more, your forces, your authority, and your funds have been divided in order to strengthen those who are armed against you, to give them more means to dictate the law to you themselves. This is what I find very harsh and almost intolerable.[33]

Realizing that the unhappy Valois must echo these sentiments, Navarre attempted to portray the current unrest not as the result of religious differences but as the consequence of traditional rivalry between the houses of Guise and Bourbon. To settle this deplorable conflict without involving the monarchy or the country at large, the calvinist king proposed the chivalrous (but unlikely) solution of hand-to-hand combat between himself and the duke of Guise.[34] If this anachronistic offer were made chiefly for effect, Navarre's attempts to pry the French king away from his alliance with the League were born of a desperate sincerity; however, the calvinist leader apparently put little faith in the success of either tactic, and instead he realistically devoted his time to accumulating forces in anticipation of a renewed civil war which promised to be "without end and without limit."[35]

For those who were neither calvinist nor Leaguer, the treaty and resulting edict did not provoke the extreme feelings expressed by these partisans, but it certainly gave little cause for rejoicing. Staunch royalists disliked an agreement so to the king's disadvantage that "[he] was on foot and the League on horseback, and the penitent's sackcloth that he wore was not proof against the armour that they wore on their backs."[36] Others less firmly committed to the monarchical ideal simply abhorred the idea of further war,[37] regarding the new proclamation "as the omen of the calamities which were going to swoop down upon the king and the kingdom."[38] Yet, more than disappointment, the settlement created speculation as to the king's intentions towards Guise and his party.

All the rhetoric in the Treaty of Nemours had not masked the fact that the king's protestations of love for his zealous servants were as meaningless as the Leaguers' declarations of eternal obedience to their monarch. Despite his apparent acquiescence, Henry had been deeply offended,[39] and his paper promises could not disguise his incapacity to either forgive or forget those who had caused his humiliation; or, as Stafford picturesquely phrased it, "there is yet in his heart a great canker which he will seek to destroy them withal, and that his mind is fully bent to have an end of them."[40]

Undeniably, the intention was there; the question was whether the king could ever find the means to effect it. Fully cognizant of their royal ally's attitude, the Leaguers were gambling that sheer physical strength would be sufficient to protect them against any attempts at vengeance, as intimidation had already proved to be a profitable policy. Others were less convinced of its continued success, particularly in light of the six months' delay which Henry had arranged, suggesting that he was bringing to fruition some plan by which he would "ensnare these lords."[41] If as yet the king lacked a coherent scheme, he did not lack the ambition to find one, having already written of his plan to "take care to do by prudence what I cannot do by force."[42]

Although it seemed doubtful that the king had formulated any definite strategy, it was obvious that his personal attitudes towards the calvinist menace did not coincide with his official position. Of course, in Henry's eyes the best solution for both France and himself was to be found in Navarre's conversion to catholicism, which would deprive the League not only of its chief pretext for war but also of its principal excuse for existence. In quest of this painless panacea for his many political ills, within four days of the new edict's publication the king had dispatched a group of theologians and bureaucrats to persuade his stubborn heir to abjure his heresy. Evidently sharing his mother's conviction that "there is no way ever to see a firm peace in this kingdom unless the king of Navarre becomes a catholic,"[43] Henry yet despaired of the mission's success, foreseeing the seeds of its failure not in his own inconstancy but in the fact that Navarre "is surrounded by people so obstinate and headstrong in their religion, that they will never permit him to leave it, but will prefer their passions to his own well-being and the public welfare of this kingdom."[44] Despite Navarre's expected intransigeance, the king continued to extend small indications of favour, such as allowing the calvinist's declaration against the League to be printed with royal privilege.[45]

The duke of Épernon served as a less subtle weathervane of royal opinion, for as the individual closest to the king he was assumed to act as an unofficial spokesman in matters where Henry did not venture to state his sentiments openly. Never hesitant to voice his hatred of the League, the overbearing duke had sworn earlier "that his lance or his sword would never aim against the house of Bourbon;"[46] now he openly offered to serve as Navarre's second in a duel against the duke of Guise.[47] And while not daring to leave the king's side himself, Épernon urged his friends to rally to Navarre's party[48]--an action which left no doubt as to Henry's true sympathies in the approaching conflict.

To increase further the suspicions already held by his catholic subjects, the unlucky Valois contrived to bring about a serious estrangement between himself and the papacy. Upon learning that the new papal nuncio for France exhibited flagrantly Spanish sympathies, Henry had ordered the prelate to be halted at Lyons;[49] when Sixtus V learned of his appointee's rejection, he exiled the French ambassador from the papal states within hours.[50] Although the dispute was settled eventually, it had serious consequences, for while Henry lacked an official representative at Rome, the pope issued a bull of excommunication against the king of Navarre and the prince of Condé. Even had it stopped at this simple pronouncement, the papal edict would have complicated the French political scene; however, the infamous brutum fulmen (as it was quickly dubbed by its many critics) continued on to declare that, as relapsed heretics, the two Bourbons were incapable of ever succeeding to the throne.

The uproar was immediate. Delighted Leaguers foresaw their party's triumph,[51] but the vast majority of French catholics proved to be determined defenders of Gallican liberties. Enraged by the pope's intervention in an area which had been considered beyond his authority since the time of Philip the Fair,[52] they declared that all previous kings, prelates, parlements and theological faculties had taught that "the pope has no right nor authority over this kingdom to rule in favour or to liquidate rights to this kingdom, nor to take it upon himself to determine the succession."[53] The Gallican torch was taken up by the parlement of Paris in an official remonstrance to the king which concluded that "the Court found the style of this bull so novel and so far removed from the modesty of former popes, that they did not recognize in it at all the voice of the Apostles' successor."[54] As a statement by a staunchly catholic group, this petition may be considered representative of the profound emotions evoked by the bull.

For Henry, the brutum fulmen exacerbated an already difficult state of affairs. Deeply offended by the pope's lack of consultation concerning the bull[55] (which the king attributed to Spanish influence at Rome),[56] the French monarch showed a comprehensible unwillingness to enhance the League's stature by pressing for the edict's acceptance within his kingdom. For once, Henry's natural tendency to do nothing served him well. By neither repudiating the bull publicly (as the more fervent Gallicans demanded)[57] nor attempting its publication in parlement (as he was enjoined to do by papal representatives),[58] he scored a tacit victory over the vociferous ultra-catholics.

The general effects of the papal order upon the political situation are difficult to assess. Although the brutum fulmen was not published, word of its contents was circulated by League propagandists, who later claimed that open papal condemnation had caused many previously misguided catholics to abandon the king of Navarre.[59] In defence of his own tepid attitude towards the bull, the king argued a contrary interpretation: convinced by the Spanish-sponsored interference that "this war is developing less for religion than for state,"[60] many catholics had moved to aid the calvinist Bourbons. Whatever the bull's impact upon the kingdom at large, it served to widen further the rift of suspicion that separated Henry from the League. As Navarre carefully pointed out to his fearful brother-in-law, acceptance of the papal bull would pave the way for Guise's usurpation of the crown by impressing upon his subjects that "the pope can dispose of your kingdom, so that in time, under another pretext, he can declare you incapable of reigning."[61] However remote this possibility, Henry had no desire to bring it any closer to reality.

Amidst this flurry of rhetoric, Henry began his half-hearted preparations for the war that seemed inevitable. As was to be expected, the catholics' progress was hampered by constant internal conflicts which came to centre upon the command of the army, an important position that the king wished to award to the duke of Montpensier, a prince of the blood who was neither calvinist nor Leaguer. However, the duke was reluctant to accept the responsibility, declaring that the campaigns were "directed against his own family . . . and not particularly against the huguenots."[62] But if Guise could not hold supreme command himself, he preferred Montpensier to either of the two royal favourites, and the Bourbon prince's sense of familial solidarity melted under League blandishments.[63] Despite his acceptance, Montpensier found that his personal ambition and fervent catholicism could not erase an antipathy to his traditional rivals, and repeated squabbles with the duke of Mayenne[64] quickly diminished his enthusiasm for war against his cousins. Although Montpensier left Paris on 15 August to assemble troops for an expedition against St. Jean d'Angely, it was obvious that the king had discovered one military leader whose ambivalence towards the war matched his own.

Reports soon reached Paris that Montpensier was not alone in considering the imminent conflict less a crusade than a vendetta, as many pro-Bourbon catholics joined the king of Navarre in order to prevent domination by the Guises.[65] Most prominent of this group was the powerful duke of Montmorency, virtual ruler of Languedoc, who signed a pact with the huguenots in which Navarre was proclaimed "defender of the King's person against the naughty practices of them that have sought to trouble his estate and to endanger his person"[66]--a stance which attempted to remove all taint of treason from opposition to the king's official policy. Summoning "all princes of the blood, all officers of the crown, all the nobility and the towns and corporations of both religions without exception"[67] to join in his struggle against the ultra-catholics who had ensnared the French king, Navarre gave notice of his determination to resist the new edict, yet he offered some hope of compromise to his reluctant royal opponent by suggesting a conference with the queen mother.[68]

Unsurprisingly, the military campaigns of late 1585 and early 1586 reflected the diffidence and uncertainty amongst the leaders. A number of small forces under various royal and League captains took the field, generally directing their attacks against huguenot strongholds in the north and east of France,[69] but no decisive conflicts occurred. After significant delays, Mayenne finally led his forces to Guyenne, where he pursued a campaign notable only for its inefficacy.[70] Among the huguenots, Navarre began the slow process of acquiring military support from foreign protestants, limiting his active military role to guerrilla activities in the south, while Condé embarked upon the most visible course by besieging royalist and League-held posts in Poitou and Touraine.[71] Generally, the one significant effect of these many skirmishes was to increase the hardships felt by the country at large, as the myriad conflicts degenerated into what Cavriana described as "universal disorder."[72]

The aimless nature of military engagements during this phase of the War of the Three Henries may be attributed to the fact that of the three main characters, only one was dedicated to pursuing the war, and in his attempts to co-ordinate a forceful catholic offensive, Henry of Guise met with near total frustration in his dealings with his nominal royal ally. Early speculation that the king's embrace of the ultra-catholics was less than wholehearted was confirmed readily enough by his subsequent lack of action to fulfil commitments made by the Treaty of Nemours. His antipathy to the Leaguers was obvious,[73] and such was the "secret hatred and suspicion" between king and duke that it was assumed Henry's slowness to effect preparations for war was part of some plan.[74] Apparently sharing this opinion, Guise himself attempted to raise sufficient troops that he would not be totally dependent on those forces which the king had promised but seemed unlikely to supply.[75] In fact, by December 1585 it was reported that Henry had assured the English ambassador that he would not be upset if Elizabeth were to aid Navarre,[76] and the king's reluctance to prosecute the war had become obvious to all.

However, the most dominant characteristic of Henry's activities in late 1585 and early 1586 was not his listless militarism but rather his total reluctance to involve himself in the responsibilities of kingship at all. Not only was there a new young favourite at court to occupy much of the monarch's time,[77] but Henry had discovered the delights of bilboquet, and walked through the streets of his capital absorbed in the childish game.[78] Furthermore, he had developed a mania for small dogs which he indulged to such an extent that he soon had accumulated a menagerie of over six hundred tiny beasts.[79] Yet even these eccentricities paled beside the overwhelming fervour with which he threw himself into religious observances. So much of the king's time was spent in retreat at Vincennes[80] that his mother felt compelled to lecture him about his avoidance of royal duties,[81] but even Catherine could not succeed in persuading him away from his fasts and twenty-hour vigils,[82] nor could she prevent him from joining a barefoot procession of penitents who walked from Paris to Chartres.[83] The queen mother had cause to worry not only about Henry's disinclination to duty, but about the effects that such rigorous devotions might have upon his health. There were frequent reports of the king's illness,[84] and in mid-1586 the Florentine Cavriana reported of the king: "his hair and beard are totally white, and he has few good teeth, even though he is only thirty-six years old."[85] Although it is possible that Henry ~~was~~ using his exaggerated devotions as a device to avoid acting upon his promises to the League,[86] it seems likely that instead they reflected his growing mental imbalance in response to the strains of a difficult period; or, as the king was reported to have confessed, "it is less religious devotion than the wish that I have to withdraw from business and people, with which I am glutted."[87]

Henry's avowed repugnance for practical matters did not prevent him from reinforcing the city guards and ordering searches for outsiders in Paris preparatory to the duke of Guise's visit in February 1586.[88] Despite the catholic leader's pre-eminence since the signing of the Treaty of Nemours, he had been less successful than he would have wished in his campaign to re-catholicize France by force: his king was unenthusiastic about the war, there were constant rumours of impending peace with the huguenots, and his promised Spanish subsidies were arriving only at irregular intervals.[89] Nor did his visit to Paris augur well. At first Henry accorded Guise only a brief audience,[90] during which their mutual "jealousy and suspicion" were evident to all,[91] and at a subsequent meeting the duke incurred his sovereign's wrath by mentioning the succession to the throne, which the king "took . . . extremely at the heart against him."[92] As the weeks passed, Henry (who even at this time "could be brought out of his capuchin's cell only with difficulty")[93] more openly showed an inclination towards peace, arguing that his promise "to clean and purge this kingdom" could be effected better by peace than by war.[94] Guise, of course, could not share this sentiment,[95] and complained that the war was not proceeding as he wished,[96] to which Henry alternately replied with repeated wishes for peace or grandiose plans for war.[97] When Guise left Paris in May to return to his campaign in the north-east, he apparently took with him nothing more substantial than verbal reassurances;[98] however, he reportedly claimed that some day people would see how much his stay in the capital had profited him.[99] As he had gained few tangible evidences of favour from the king, this remark was thought to pertain to Guise's great popularity among the Parisians,[100] who had greeted him with joyous acclamation from the moment of his arrival in the city.[101] This enthusiasm was to endure for Guise's lifetime, and if indeed this was the meaning of the duke's observation, subsequent events were to provide its total vindication.

Once the ultra-catholic leader had left the court, Henry devoted what little energy he gave affairs of state towards opening negotiations with Navarre. Even during Guise's sojourn in Paris the king had instructed marshal Biron to arrange a truce with the huguenots if possible,[102] and the Spanish ambassador himself was certain that Henry was working on some secret plot to the detriment of the League.[103] Again, the crux of royal strategy was Navarre's conversion to catholicism,[104] for as soon as that necessary step had been taken, Henry seemed determined "to favour the king of Navarre in all things, and to give him all the vantage he can to pull down the others, when the colour of religion . . . is taken away."[105] Certainly, the king was not unrealistic in estimating the immense benefit he personally would derive from Navarre's abandoning the calvinist faith, but he was less than realistic about the likelihood of such an occurrence, as was demonstrated in early June of 1586 when Henry failed to reap any substantive advantage from a delegation from Navarre simply because the French king was piqued that the delegation did not sue for peace immediately.[106]

Henry's desire for accommodation with his huguenot brother-in-law was spurred on by his awareness of the League's close ties with Spain. In May Mendoza reported that the French king obviously knew of Guise's communication with Philip II,[107] and in August Henry himself raged that the Leaguers troubled "less than ever to hide the dealings that they have with [the king of Spain]."[108] Such links appeared more dangerous than usual in light of persistent rumour within diplomatic circles that Philip was planning some massive offensive whose goal was as yet undefined;[109] thus, it is unsurprising that upon receiving further reports of Spanish aid to Guise, Henry exploded, "such things bother me so much that I would like . . . to strangle those people who injure me without cause."[110]

Momentary indignation did not stop Henry from abandoning his capital and concerns of government for the waters of Bourbonnais during the summer and fall of 1586. However, during his apparent holiday from responsibility, he left the queen mother to conduct further negotiations with Navarre. Discussions dragged on for months, during which time word of the proceedings inevitably came to Guise, who advised Catherine that as "it is prohibited to negotiate with excommunicated heretics," he would ask her "with all humility not to explore this abyss, for it would vex us to be forced to disobey you."[111] Ultra-catholic threats notwithstanding, the talks were continued only because of the queen's determination to arrange a personal interview with the calvinist king (or, as Stafford crudely phrased it, because of her "very great desire to creep in with Navarre.")[112] Despite the many delays which the queen mother blamed on her son-in-law,[113] her persistence finally led to a series of conferences held at the chateau of Saint-Brice, near Cognac in southwestern France.

The first meeting, in mid-December, opened with formal pleasantries which soon degenerated into mutual recriminations;[114] however, the two royal antagonists did succeed in extending a truce for the area until mid-January 1587.[115] This slight indication of rapprochement was followed by no others, and Catherine spent most of January 1587 at Saint-Brice waiting for Navarre to return to negotiations.[116]

By the beginning of 1587 Henry's optimism concerning Navarre's conversion began to wear thin. Although the French king wrote his mother unusually detailed letters reiterating the necessity of negotiation in order to advance the cause of catholicism, to spare his kingdom the ravages of war, and to prevent invasion by foreign mercenaries, he apparently understood that Navarre "gave very little hope that he and those of his party will come to the point that we wish."[117] Nevertheless, Henry advised the queen not to give up hope entirely, but to direct her enticements not towards the huguenots as a whole but towards Navarre as an individual. Inform the calvinist leader, instructed Henry, that "I cannot save my kingdom . . . or do anything for him, unless he helps me concerning the issue of religion;" but she should also assure Navarre that he would reap the greatest advantage out of this, for he would be treated with honour, his rank would be preserved, and he would be granted a large pension. In addition, the king counselled his mother to offer other notables of Navarre's faction similar bribes, "in order to win them and draw them to our devotion."[118] Despite these tactics, at the same time Henry wrote his ambassador in Venice that he was beginning to despair of gaining peace, "for [the huguenots] want to stand by their religion so pigheadedly."[119]

Navarre's uncharacteristically cavalier attitude to the conferences at Saint-Brice bore witness to his similar belief in the futility of such talks at that time. The huguenot leader's distrust of the queen mother dated back to the Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre, if not before, and he had no reason to trust a king who in the spring of 1585 had promised to uphold his policy of toleration only to sign the anti-calvinist Treaty of Nemours within weeks. Fully cognizant of the fact that Henry was using the conferences as an excuse to gain time in his struggle with the League, Navarre coolly exploited them for the same purpose;[120] while Catherine waited for his reappearance at Saint-Brice, Navarre brought his negotiations with John Casimir of the Palatinate to a successful conclusion, arranging for 8,000 cavalry (reiters) and 14,000 infantry (landsknechts) to move into eastern France by the early summer of 1587.[121] With huguenot forces already holding their own against catholic armies and with the promise of such substantial reinforcements, the calvinist chief felt no need to clutch at the fragile straw of royal support offered by his unreliable king.

By March 1587, when Catherine abandoned in despair her vigil at Saint-Brice, her son finally had accepted the failure of the one policy he had pursued consistently since the outbreak of hostilities with the League; however, he never relinquished all hope of its eventual success, and was to revert to seeking Navarre's conversion to catholicism in each subsequent crisis. At the moment, Henry made a great show of his determination to enforce religious uniformity within his kingdom,[122] and, calling an assembly of important Parisians, he announced his intention to confiscate all huguenot property in order to assist financially in the war that seemed necessary.[123] Yet, at the same time, the king showed his antipathy for the League and its leaders more and more openly, protesting that,

> they cannot say they are driven by religious zeal, because I want to make war upon our religion's enemies much more than they do, and they are only strengthening our enemies by dividing the catholics, when they ought to join me to help me undertake the war into which they have launched me.[124]

The English ambassador referred to "the jealousies that the King and they of the League be [in] one of another, which is daily continued and augmented,"[125] while the Florentine Cavriana commented that the royalists and ultra-catholics seemed to be arming against one another.[126] Although Henry's instability made it impossible for contemporaries to predict his actions with any certainty,[127] it would seem that during this chaotic period the French king was returning to the strategy of survival which had been implicit in the Treaty of Nemours. If his primary plan had failed to materialize through Navarre's unwillingness to abjure calvinism, he had to turn to his secondary strategy, which was to pit Navarre and Guise against each other. As early as March 1586 Stafford had predicted that Henry would prefer to see Guise and his party oppose the protestant reiters so that "one side must needs be altogether weakened, and the other side so shaken as [the king] with his fresh army shall bring the victorious party to what composition he himself will."[128] It was a scenario that was to prove ever more attractive to Henry as the year passed.

The growing tension between Henry and the League was nowhere more apparent than in the kingdom's capital, where the ultra-catholics had become a strident anti-monarchical force. Under the leadership of the Council of Sixteen, a group whose name was derived not from the number of its members but from the number of political districts in Paris,[129] the League had recruited supporters throughout the orders of society. campaigning secretly among clergy, lawyers, members of all trades and professions, and even such _menu peuple_ as dockworkers ("_tous mauvais garçons_"), the ultra-catholic organizers spread word of an immense and terrible plot being formulated by huguenots and politiques, who planned "to slit the throat of every catholic" so that the crown would pass to Navarre.[130] To protect themselves against this horrendous fate, catholics had to arm themselves. Thus, while recognizing the duke of Guise as the unquestioned leader of French ultra-catholics, the League in Paris was in many ways an autonomous body with the drive and organization to generate its own plans for rebellion. However, its initial impact upon the French political scene resulted from League dominance of catholic pulpits, from which fervent preachers could harangue their parishioners concerning the hypocrisy of those who professed the true religion but did not assist the ultra-catholics.[131] Recognizing that royal support for the League was at best tepid, the League propagandists spread word that the king favoured Navarre[132] and had gone so far as to call in protestant mercenaries to whom he gladly would "abandon our lives and goods."[133] And so the peace-loving Henry found life in his capital a continuous barrage of invective from those fanatical orators whom Pasquier termed "dangerous tools, when they sharpen their tongues."[134]

Unfortunately for the royalist cause, Henry's incessant search for funds provided League propagandists with ample ammunition for criticism. In June 1586 the king had resorted to the ceremony of a lit de justice in order to publish twenty-seven new financial edicts which created a vast number of new offices, increased taxation on certain commodities, and provided for the heritability of many positions.[135] Popular reaction was immediate and violent,[136] with placards appearing "against the tyrant who taxes anything, even urine and the shade from trees,"[137] while Cavriana reported that the Parisians "mutter against [the king], blame him, curse him, post lampoons here and there, and threaten him extraordinarily."[138] Although Henry finally withdrew the most offensive edicts in fear of a revolt within his capital,[139] he continued his attempts to exact funds from the city throughout the following year, to the great dissatisfaction of the people who "loudly cried out that their property was stolen to be given to these indescribable mignons, the true bloodsuckers and plague of the kingdom."[140] As Palma-Cayet was to reflect, these financial exactions gave the Leaguers a pretext upon which they could "entice a great number of the humbler classes away from obedience to the king."[141]

The success of this strategy was evident as royal prestige plummeted ever lower during 1587. Under a relentless assault of defamatory pamphlets and incendiary sermons,[142] Henry found himself increasingly unsure of even his own safety in a city where he was "so despised and his authority so weakened . . ., that he was spoken of only with derision."[143] As rumours grew that the League was building up forces within Paris,[144] the king began to take protective counter-measures to search houses for men and weapons and to take notice of any group of men or nobleman's suite larger than usual.[145] The need for such precautions was soon confirmed by the revelation of a definite League plot which, according to the conspirator who provided information, was aimed at taking control of strategic points in Paris, capturing the king, killing his advisors, and supplying him with League councillors who would be all-powerful.[146] Once warned of the scheme, Henry withdrew to the Louvre, reinforced the guards ("tripled and quadrupled the sentinels"),[147] and ordered the streets to be patrolled; however, he made no move against the duke of Mayenne or against any of the council of Sixteen who had been named as leaders of the conspiracy. Indeed, when Mayenne came to the Louvre a few days later to protest rumours of sedition in which he was implicated,[148] the king did not contradict his claims of innocence, and permitted him to leave Paris shortly thereafter.[149]

Talk of treachery did not end with Mayenne's departure, and a few weeks later Henry again received word of impending attack. Once more the purported revolt was forestalled by prompt preventive measures,[150] but League machinations within Paris were making the king's position untenable. Whether or not the plots perpetrated by the Council of Sixteen were approved by Guise,[151] they served to focus the king's hostility upon the ultra-catholic leader who Henry was certain meant "to deprive him of his crown and to sheaf [shove] him into a monastery."[152] Beyond these League-fomented disorders in Paris, the king's temper was worn thin by the conduct of ultra-catholics in the field, for both Guise in Lorraine and Aumale in Picardy paid no attention to royal directives but were said "to stir like princes and kings."[153]

Upon the queen mother's return from her long and futile negotiations with Navarre, she set out to patch up the alliance between king and League that was so obviously hanging in tatters. Disconcerted by her son's assertion that he was so angered by events in Picardy that he would march against Aumale himself "if I were not held back by fear of dividing the catholics and arming them against each other,"[154] Catherine embarked upon her travels again, this time heading to north-east France for a conference with the ultra-catholic leaders. Under instructions to "discover their true resolutions and to try to remove the shadows which keep them separated from me,"[155] the queen met Guise and others of his party near Rheims, where she received declarations of the Leaguers' great affection for the royal cause; however, the avowals were followed by lengthy complaints of the penury in which the king kept them, and when Catherine broached the subject of Picardy, there were expressions of sympathy but no offer to restore the royal towns which Aumale had taken by force.[156] Subsequent meetings produced no more than repeated recriminations against the king's failure to support the ultra-catholics properly, although the queen attempted to create some facade of catholic unity in view of the expected protestant invasion.[157] Finally deciding to meet the League leaders in person, Henry left for the town of Meaux on 19 June 1587 but returned to Paris a week later without having seen Guise, who had retired to Châlons. After further diplomatic manoeuvrings by the determine queen mother, both the king and the duke appeared at Meaux on 2 July, where their mutual complaints finally resolved into a decision to combat the German army which was about to enter France.[158] The show of catholic alliance had been preserved, but at a cost to the monarchy of accepting without rebuke League depredations throughout the kingdom.[159]

The arrival of Navarre's German allies on France's eastern borders overshadowed all other concerns during the last week of August. Catholic fears of a general slaughter were not abated by the calvinist king's protestation that he had introduced the mercenaries only to defend his family against the Guises and to protect his right to the French throne[160]--a stance that was confirmed when Navarre was joined by two catholic cousins who previously had been attached to the French court.[161] To oppose the projected protestant offensive, the catholic armies formed three basic units: Guise and his forces were to bear the brunt of the *reiters*' attack in the north-east; Joyeuse led an army that faced the huguenot-held south-west; and the king was to take command of a large force stationed on the Loire at Gien. Suspicions that Henry was hoping to strike at Guise indirectly were reinforced by reports that the king had refused Guise the assistance he had requested,[162] while rumours spread that a jubilant Henry had been heard to say: "*De inimicis meis vindicabo inimicos meos*."[163] Once the king took the field in mid-September (having "shaken off his fatal drowsiness and those soft pleasures of the Court"),[164] he obviously enjoyed playing soldier, and sent dispatches proclaiming that he meant "to inspire his subjects and servants by his presence;"[165] however, as Navarre showed a comprehensible reluctance to join battle with his sovereign,[166] Henry saw little action.

Yet while the king waited with his army on the Loire, his grand design to re-establish monarchical power was destroyed. In the first stage of the calamity, on 20 October 1587 the impetuous Joyeuse joined battle with Navarre near the town of Coutras. Within two hours the well-appointed royal army was cut to pieces by the experienced huguenots, and the favourite was killed.[167]

While Henry was recovering from this first setback to his plans, disaster struck on the second front. The large body of protestant mercenaries[168] that Guise was to oppose in the north-east was not the invincible force that had been feared; instead, weakened by disease and divisions among the leadership, the army was racked by rumours of mutiny.[169] Rather than risk a pitched battle in which he would be outnumbered,[170] the French duke chose to harass the invading forces as they moved slowly south and west. On the night of 26 October, Guise led a small party in a daring attack on the reiters' camp at Vimory, and although the French eventually were driven off, their audacity so demoralized the mercenaries that the Swiss regiments mutinied and opened negotiations for a truce with Henry.[171] After a month of intermittent skirmishes between the protestant and ultra-catholic forces, on 24 November Guise entrapped the main body of the invading army within the village of Auneau, and the ensuing massacre effectively destroyed the mercenaries as a military threat.[172]

Fearing that Guise might augment his reputation by further exploits, Henry moved quickly to arrange for the peaceable withdrawal of the protestant survivors. As the Swiss regiments had already agreed to leave in exchange for certain financial considerations,[173] the king dispatched Épernon to work out a similar settlement with the remaining protestant leaders.[174] Understandably reluctant to see the reiters escape so easily, Guise and his colleagues ignored the truce and continued to harass the retreating forces, to the point that the queen mother herself was said to have admitted that without the king's intervention, Guise would have demolished the Germans.[175]

Thus, his grand strategy in ruins, the disgruntled Henry returned to his capital which rang with the praises of his ultra-catholic rival. Neither the king's inactivity on the Loire nor his treating with the protestants had won popular approval, and the League preachers proclaimed loudly that,

> instead of negotiating with them they should have been torn into pieces, and it was disgraceful to have sent home such rabble and brigands with their lives and equipment intact . . . when there was a way to defeat them and destroy them totally. . . . The reiters had been levied, hired, and dismissed by the king, as was shown by the good treatment he gave them.[176]

The campaigns of 1587 had left the king with his forces and his reputation sadly diminished, while the strength and fame of Guise augmented daily.

Henry's chagrin reached a crescendo when he learned that his rival also was acclaimed outside the kingdom as the saviour of French catholicism:[177] the pope had Guise presented with a sword engraved with flames symbolic of his religious zeal, and the great Parma himself sent his own weapons to the catholic duke, declaring that no other prince was so worthy to carry the arms of Christendom.[178]

Yet the king's conduct did little to ameliorate this popular judgment. Despite his avowed intention to follow up the catholic victory by renewed campaigns in Poitou,[179] Henry remained in Paris, alternating between fits of devotion to his God and to his favourites. If the first pastime evoked little reaction beyond pity and scorn, the second stirred his subjects to such fury against Épernon in particular that one observer commented, "if [the duke] continues in this greatness, it is a miracle."[180] Joyeuse's death had vacated the positions of governor of Normandy and admiral, and although the king had half-promised the latter honour to one of Guise's colleagues,[181] instead he bestowed them both upon the remaining archmignon. Whether this decision grew from love for Épernon or from lack of trusted followers,[182] Henry thus augmented the hatred for the haughty duke to the point that the favourite went nowhere without numerous guards.[183]

In contrast to the king's apparent disregard for public opinion, his rival moved swiftly to entrench his position within France. With the end of the winter campaigns, Guise held a family conclave at Nancy in order to draw up a list of demands which the Leaguers felt secure enough to present to the king. If he granted them, the ultra-catholics would gain virtual control of the monarchy; and if he refused them, they had a pretext for arming against him.[184] The resulting articles of Nancy represented the most extreme exposition of League aims since its inception: the king was to support the ultra-catholic association more openly and to remove from his confidence certain persons who would be named (a reference to Épernon); the decrees of the Council of Trent were to be published and enforced; the Inquisition should be introduced; the clergy must be allowed to buy back lands that had been alienated; all those who were presently huguenots were to have their property sold, and all those who had been calvinists at any time since 1560 were to have one-third of their wealth confiscated; all catholics were to give one-tenth of their revenues to the cause; all huguenot prisoners should be put to death, and all catholic prisoners should serve at least three years in the army without pay; the Leaguers were to be given permission to fortify those towns already granted them by the Treaty of Nemours, and the leaders were to be accorded other cities which they would name.[185] The proposals' very stringency would suggest that they were not meant to be taken seriously at the moment, for when the articles were sent to Henry in February 1588, he received them with a practised display of courteous dissimulation,[186] and the ultra-catholics did not choose to press their case.[187]

Indications soon abounded that the League meant to employ more tangible arguments than mere words. Undercurrents of violence still swirled through the French capital: Guise's rabble-rousing sister, the duchess of Montpensier, cheerfully flouted the king's order of exile from Paris while continuing her openly seditious activities, and the indomitable catholic preachers redoubled their harangues against all hypocritical protectors of heresy;[188] the people protested against heavy taxes which were squandered on such extravaganzas as Joyeuse's funeral, and royal officers were necessary to disarm radical university students.[189] Against this background of simmering revolt spread ever louder whispers of massive Spanish preparations for war,[190] while in Picardy the duke of Aumale returned to his campaign against royalist as well as huguenot-held towns.[191]

Although the king apparently devoted himself to frivolities "as if there were no longer war nor League in France,"[192] he was not unaware of these continual threats but as always looked first for pacific remedies. After dispatching a delegation to Guise in an attempt to reconcile the ultra-catholics' independent actions with his own desired policies,[193] Henry sent a brief to the pope asking that His Holiness use his influence to restrain "those who want to make themselves greater than they are, and whose objective is to satisfy their ambition rather than to advance the service of God."[194] Yet realizing that neither negotiation nor an improbable papal reprimand would weaken the League's vitality, once more Henry turned his hopes to the impossible project of Navarre's conversion. In January the king had sent his trusted councillor Bellièvre to the duke of Montmorency in an attempt to work upon the calvinist king through his powerful catholic ally,[195] and throughout the first two months of 1588 the English ambassador sent repeated reports of rumoured negotiations between the two kings.[196]

Finally, in desperation Henry sought to inveigle Queen Elizabeth herself into acting as an intermediary with his stubbornly protestant heir. In a secret meeting with ambassador Stafford,[197] the unhappy Valois begged that the English monarch persuade Navarre "to accommodate himself with the French king, in such sort as the League might have no more pretence to ruin France and him both." When the ambassador replied that he could hardly expect the protestant queen to urge Navarre's abandonment of their common faith, Henry protested that although personally a devout catholic, "he was not so much a bigot . . . that he would rather let France ruin and himself than suffer liberty and exercise both, as he had both done and would do again with all his heart," but before he could accomplish this "the colour of maintaining of arms [must] be taken away, which cannot be except that the King of Navarre yield to him in religion." Moreover, the French king pointed out his calvinist brother-in-law's status as heir to the throne, "whom in the end, what brags soever any made (if it were not for religion) [Henry] would ever and should acknowledge him to be so." Despite these tempting offers, the sovereigns of England and Navarre apparently reflected upon the French king's past infidelities and present weakness, and did not accede to Henry's wishes.

Nor did the king's other strategies to curb the League enjoy any greater success. Rather than censure the ultra-catholics, who had proved themselves zealous defenders of the faith (regardless of their other faults), the pope was inclined to condemn Henry for his dealings with the excommunicant king of Navarre.[198] Direct negotiation with the League, carried out by the secretary Bellièvre, also proved a futile exercise. Covertly supported by the Spanish ambassador who argued that the catholic princes should neither lay down arms nor reach any agreement with the French king,[199] Guise refused to admit that his activities constituted a breach of faith with king or country, and wrote the queen mother in well-simulated despair, "I shall beseech God to grant me the mercy that my actions may be recognized and judged such as they are."[200] Well fortified with Spanish funds and promises, the duke saw no reason to compromise at this time.

Henry's circuitous attempts to restrain the League had met with total failure. Could he find a more direct remedy?

Briefly, it seemed he might. Upon learning that Picardy was suffering under the duke of Aumale's zealous administration (which plundered heretics and converts alike),[201] Henry had ordered the enthusiastic Leaguer to disband his companies and retire to his estates; however, instead of complying Aumale had increased his forces and taken a suburb of Abbéville.[202] Offering the unabashed explanation that he had acted thus in order to prevent the installation of a royal garrison,[203] Aumale showed little inclination to obey Henry's directives, nor did his cousin the duke of Guise seem willing to restrain his enthusiastic colleague.[204] Infuriated by this disobedience, the king grandly declared, "I see clearly that if I offer no resistance to these people, I will have them not only for companions, but for masters in the end. It is time to give order to this."[205] At last it seemed that Henry meant to act: he began organizing troops for the expedition, "and assureth to be himself, within less than a month, in person at Amiens, and to lose all, or to chastise them that stir in Picardy."[206]

Yet again, the king's bravado evaporated into empty phrases. Fearing that this sudden campaign would divide all catholics irrevocably (even if it did not end in personal disaster for her son), the queen mother opposed the plan with great determination, making "so many difficulties to be propounded, so many fears to be advertised and so many false things to be given out, [that] she amazeth the king."[207] Some of the queen's objections were not unfounded: for example, the duke of Parma was moving troops to Picardy's border in apparent support of the ultra-catholics, as Guise himself requested.[208] However, the greatest argument against the proposed venture lay in the growing tension within Paris itself, which threatened to erupt during the king's absence. Given these complications, once more Henry fell back on attempts at negotiation.

And so Bellièvre, who had returned from his fruitless talks with the League, was sent off again to meet with the catholic leaders at Soissons. However, it seemed unrealistic to expect any lasting reconciliation, for the king's councillor could promise little more than the bribes which Guise had already rejected (although he described them to Mendoza as "a world of extraordinary offers which I compare to the temptations the devil made to our Lord.")[209] By now Guise's menacing intransigeance was such that even his erstwhile defender, the queen mother, wrote Bellièvre to inform the duke that no longer would she intervene with the king on his behalf,[210] while the frustrated royal negotiator asked to be recalled.[211]

In the meantime, the political situation in Paris had become explosive with the League's growth in organization, in strength, and in audacity. Oppressive taxation and Épernon's pre-eminence had sapped traditional loyalty to the crown, while the exhortations of fanatical preachers and Guise's own exploits against the heretics had created widespread sympathy for his party--a sympathy which the Council of Sixteen sought to mobilize through a network of ultra-catholic agents that permeated the urban social structure. Secretly encouraged by the Spanish ambassador (who sought some civil conflict to prevent Henry from aiding England against the Armada),[212] once again the Council decided to attempt an uprising against the king which would place power in the hands of the League.[213] Believing that Guise's presence in Paris was essential to the success of their plans, the capital's ultra-catholics kept in close contact with the duke by means of his lieutenants, but found him hesitant to contravene the king's instructions forbidding him to enter the city at that time.[214] When rumours of the League's intrigues reached the court, Henry responded as he had to similar threats in the past by reinforcing the guards at the Louvre, but he also ordered a regiment of 4,000 Swiss to move nearer the capital.[215] The latter act in particular inspired ultra-catholic fears that at last the king's anger was to fall upon them, and they sent entreaties to Guise to save his supporters from imminent royal reprisals.[216]

It was a moment of crisis for Guise. If he did not answer the appeal from Paris, he would alienate the most fervent group of ultra-catholics in France, who had already indicated disappointment at his lack of sympathy for their schemes of the previous year. Moreover, the possibility existed that this final provocation might have stirred Henry to act against the Council of Sixteen; if they came to injury while Guise ignored their pleas, the duke would be discredited forever as a catholic hero. As encouraging factors, Guise could look to the League's military strength in the country at large as well as in the capital and to the Spanish ambassador's wholehearted support; to dissuade the duke from moving against the monarchy, there was only the royal prohibition which would brand him a rebel, and the consequent danger to his person that a journey to Paris would bring. Reflecting upon the way in which the king had shown himself susceptible to intimidation in the past, Guise made his decision.

At the same time, a frightened Henry ordered Bellièvre to return to Soissons with an injunction repeating earlier orders banning the ultra-catholic leader from the capital; however, the prohibition came too late. On 9 May 1588 Guise entered Paris.[217]

Accompanied by only eight or nine gentlemen, the duke proceeded to the queen mother's residence, where he could expect a more favourable reception than at the court itself. Upset by Guise's arrival, Catherine de Medici immediately sent a messenger to her son advising him of this dramatic complication, and then agreed to escort the catholic leader to the Louvre for an audience with the king. As Guise walked through the streets beside the queen's litter, he was greeted with "incredible transports of publique joy."[218] Ever larger crowds pressed around him, shouting "Long live Guise, pillar of the Church,"[219] and one woman was reported to have cried out, "Good prince, since you are here we are all saved!"[220]

At the Louvre, the scene was no less tumultuous but considerably less joyful. Upon hearing of Guise's disobedience, the astonished king swore: "He has come--God's death! he will die for this;"[221] and he gave orders to assemble his guards, who were drawn up "in better order and more conspicuously than usual."[222] Although a few councillors supported Henry's spontaneously bloodthirsty reaction, most advised a more moderate course in view of public enthusiasm for the duke.[223] Thus, Guise's triumphal procession ended at the entrance to the Louvre, where "nobody in the world saluted [him],"[224] but he was spared a summary execution.

Instead, the king received him with a curt inquiry as to the reasons for his appearance in defiance of royal orders. "Very nervous and extremely pale,"[225] the duke asked the king's pardon, explaining that he had come in person to defend himself against the malicious lies spread by his enemies. This excuse did not abate the monarch's displeasure, but he permitted Guise to emerge from the brief meeting alive; the duke's survival and the fact that the interview occurred at all represented a victory for the League and its leader.

Uncertain of Guise's intentions but convinced of his malevolence, Henry again redoubled the guard around the Louvre that evening[226] and then contemplated his next move. Again, he pondered executing the catholic duke; again, he was dissuaded.[227] The next two days passed in an atmosphere of rising tension and military consolidation. On 10 May Guise came to the court with a retinue of thirty to forty followers,[228] all of whom "smiled in the face of adversity"[229] as their leader and the king engaged in a long and mutually suspicious discussion of the kingdom's problems (including recent events in Picardy, for which the duke disclaimed all responsibility).[230] Nevertheless, they parted on reasonably amicable terms--a sharp contrast to Guise's reception the following day, when "as soon as [the king] saw Guise arrive, he turned his face the other way."[231] Having received word that the forces he had summoned from Lagny were approaching the city, Henry obviously felt less conciliatory towards his ultra-catholic rival.

Later that afternoon the king made careful plans for the troops' entry. First of all, he issued orders that certain companies of the Paris militia were to stand guard in various areas of the city that night;[232] however, of the eleven companies selected as the most reliable royalists, only seven would fulfill their service.[233] With this ominous indication of popular sentiment, the early dawn of 12 May witnessed the entrance into the city of 4,000 Swiss troops, who, under the command of marshal Biron, were dispatched to the bridges and strategic intersections, apparently with instructions of a strictly defensive nature.

Thus Paris awoke to the terrifying sight of a foreign occupation. All the rumours that the Council of Sixteen had circulated diligently for weeks--that Henry was going to execute prominent Leaguers, that he was imposing a royal garrison upon the capital city, that he had allied with the huguenots in order to massacre all catholics[234]--suddenly seemed justified to the Parisians. At this point spontaneous reaction intermingled with League strategy, as the citizens began to erect barricades of chains, paving stones, furniture, and miscellaneous debris to prevent any troop movement. Informed of his subjects' anger, the king sent Villequier, governor of Paris, to communicate to the citizenry that the Swiss had come only for the city's protection; unconvinced, the people listened to Villequier, allowed him to pass, and then went back to building their impromptu fortifications.[235] Increasingly conscious of their possible isolation, the well-disciplined companies waited for a command to attack the barricades before they became too strong to breach--but waited in vain.

Suddenly, around mid-day, the battles began. A determined group of students directed by the Leaguer Brissac broke through the poorly secured place Maubert[236] and streamed into the city, stimulating a general assault upon the royal troops who were now trapped within the barricades. Overwhelmed by barrages of stones, chains, and musket-balls,[237] the exhausted companies (who had gone without provisions since early morning)[238] were soon at the mercy of the infuriated mob. Informed of their peril, Henry reluctantly dispatched several commanders to withdraw the soldiers to the Louvre. Yet even this evidence of the king's retreat did not appease the anti-royalists, for instead of permitting the troops to depart the Parisians redoubled their attacks, "threatening . . . to tear them to pieces."[239] Finally, in order to save his soldiers' lives, Henry subjected himself to the humiliation of asking Guise to intervene with the armed populace.

The duke's emergence from the townhouse in which he had remained all day touched off new demonstrations, but of exhilaration rather than fury. Conducting himself amidst the tumult with "marvellous modesty . . . and equal courtesy,"[240] Guise requested and received the troops' release--"this foolish rabble's wrath being appeased at the mere sound of [his] voice,"[241] as L'Estoile complained. While the demoralized companies returned to their even more demoralized king, the streets echoed with shouts of "_Vive_ Guise!" to which the duke replied (with considerable discretion if not sincerity), "My friends, enough! . . Cry '_Vive_ _le_ _roi_.'"[242] Yet Guise's demurrals could place only a polite mask over what was recognized by everyone: in Paris, the duke had become king.

For Henry, the events of 12 May had attained a nightmarish quality. His display of force had not quelled rebellion but had incited it; instead of overpowering his ultra-catholic rival, the king had had to call upon him for assistance; and now, worst of all, his own subjects held him a virtual prisoner within the Louvre. In search of some remedy for this incredible reversal of fortune, the monarch ordered another royal regiment to approach Paris,[243] and then spent a watchful night surrounded by guards who stood with swords unsheathed.[244]

By morning, royal prospects seemed no brighter: disorders continued unabated, barricades crept ever closer to the king's residence, and Leaguers now controlled the city's main gates. As his last hope for military victory vanished, Henry frantically sought other solutions, and thus welcomed a parlementary delegation that offered to serve as mediator in the civil conflict. Reluctantly accepting his magistrates' recommendation that "there was no other way to make [the rebels] quit . . . their barricades,"[245] the king agreed to withdraw all extraordinary forces from the capital and to countermand his order for reinforcements[246]--a desperate gamble that at best might appease the Parisians' anger and at worst could hardly render Henry more helpless than he already was. However, the strategem's doubtful efficacy was never tested, as shortly thereafter the king decided upon a more radical course of action.

While Henry was conferring with his civic councillors, the queen mother had travelled to the Hôtel-de-Guise in a futile attempt to reconcile the catholic hero with her beleaguered son at a price less than surrender of sovereignty. Unheeding of Catherine's pleas that he demonstrate "a greater desire to serve than to destroy the crown,"[247] Guise refused even to meet with the king at the Louvre for discussions concerning the pacification of Paris.[248] Word of the duke's recalcitrance reached Henry simultaneously with reports that Guise was planning to lead a large force against the Louvre that very night.[249] Only too conscious of his court's inability to withstand any such attack, the frightened Valois recalled past rumours of League plots against his person (all of which culminated in his death, abduction, or compulsory abdication) and resolved that his only hope to continue as king of France lay in escape from Paris.

The details were not difficult to arrange. While Guise was distracted by yet another conference with the queen mother, Henry strolled out of the Louvre toward the Tuileries, where he found his most trusted councillors waiting with horses. Together they galloped through the unguarded Porte Neuve on the road to Chartres, as the king said what proved to be a permanent farewell to his fickle capital.

CHAPTER II: FOOTNOTES

[1] Stafford to Walsingham, 20 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 409; Serres, 832.

[2] Stafford to Burghley, 14 May 1585, CSPF, XIX, 461.

[3] Pasquier, 261.

[4] Stafford to Walsingham, 2 July 1585, CSPF, XIX, 549.

[5] L'Estoile, 386.

[6] Walsingham to Stafford, 1 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 370.

[7] Maimbourg, 121; Palma-Cayet, Petitot, 1st ser., XXXVIII, 266.

[8] Stafford to Walsingham, 2 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 390.

[9] Serres, 832; Maimbourg, 120-121.

[10] Stafford to Walsingham, 2 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 372.

[11] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 7 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 280.

[12] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 29 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 305.

[13] Stafford to Walsingham, 2 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 372.

[14] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 14 April 1585, Lettres, VIII, 251.

[15] Report from Stafford, Feb. 1585, CSPF, XIX, 308.

[16] Lucinge, Débuts, 89.

[17] Stafford to Walsingham, 20 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 409.

[18] L'Estoile, 379-380.

[19] Léo Mouton, *Un demi-roi: le duc d'Épernon* (Paris: Perrin et Cie, 1922), 145-146. Cited hereafter as Mouton.

[20] Stafford to Walsingham, 2 April 1585, CSPF, XIX, 371.

[21] Aubigné, VI, 240.

[22] Stafford to Walsingham, 20 April 1585, XIX, 412.

[23] Villeroy, Petitot, 1st ser., XLIV, 37-38.

[24] L'Estoile, 384.

[25] Lucinge, Débuts, 147.

[26] Pasquier, 260-261. Similar reports are found in L'Estoile, 384; Davila, 283; Aubigné, VI, 241.

[27] Busini to Vinta, 23 July 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 589.

[28] L'Estoile, 384.

[29] Davila, 281.

[30] L'Estoile, 385.

[31] Pierre Matthieu, *Histoire des derniers troubles de France* (Paris: [1601?]), 26.

[32] Henry of Navarre to Henry III, 10 July 1585, Lettres missives, II, 87.

[33] *Ibid*., 87-88.

[34] Busini to Vinta, 25 June 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 584; Déclaration du roy de Navarre, Mornay, III, 124.

[35] Duplessis to Elbène, 8 July 1585, Mornay, III, 149.

[36] L'Estoile, 383.

[37] Pasquier, 261.

[38] Jacques-Auguste de Thou, Histoire universelle, IX, 329, quoted in Robiquet, 216.

[39] Cavriana to Vinta, 11 June 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 613.

[40] Stafford to Burghley, 10 July 1585, CSPF, XIX, 574.

[41] Lucinge, Débuts, 113.

[42] Henry III to Maisse, 5 July 1585, Negs. Levant, IV, 377.

[43] Catherine de Medici to Bellièvre, 31 May 1585, Lettres, VIII, 308.

[44] Henry III to Maisse, 20 July 1585, Negs. Levant, IV, 389.

[45] Duplessis to Clervant, Mornay, III, 126; L'Estoile, 383.

[46] Lucinge, Débuts, 89.

[47] Duplessis to Montmorency, July 1585, Mornay, III, 153.

[48] Lucinge, Débuts, 121.

[49] *Ibid*., 174.

[50] Guy de Brémond d'Ars, *Jean de Vivonne: sa vie et ses ambassades* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1884), 185. Cited hereafter as Brémond d'Ars.

[51] Aubigné, VI, 240; Davila, 284.

[52] Lucinge, Débuts, 209.

[53] Association de Bergerac, Mornay, III, 219-220.

[54] Recueil de diverses pièces servant à l'histoire de Henry III, Roy de France et de Pologne (Cologne: Chez Pierre du Marteau, 1663), 90.

[55] Davila, 284.

[56] Maisse to Henry III, 24 Sept. 1585, Negs. Levant, IV, 411.

[57] L'Estoile, 389.

[58] Busini to Vinta, 29 Oct. 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 594.

[59] Lucinge, Débuts, 201.

[60] Henry III to Maisse, 25 Oct. 1585, Negs. Levant, IV, 422n.

[61] Henry of Navarre to Henry III, 1 Dec. 1585, Lettres missives, II, 149.

[62] Cavriana to Vinta, 9 July 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 614.

[63] Stafford to Walsingham, 2 July 1585, CSPF, XIX, 549; Cavriana to Vinta, 9 July 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 614.

[64] Lucinge, Débuts, 158.

[65] *Ibid.*, 168; Cavriana to Vinta, 4 August 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 622.

[66] Stafford to Burghley, 30 August 1585, CSPF, XIX, 665.

[67] *Ibid.*

[68] *Ibid.*

[69] Jensen, 73.

[70] Stafford to Burghley, 24 Oct. 1585, CSPF, XX (1585-1586), 83; Wagmore to Walsingham, 20 April 1586, CSPF, XX, 535: "without performing anything worthy the reputation of his army."

[71] Catherine de Medici to Guise, 8 Nov. 1585, Lettres, VIII, 364.

[72] Cavriana to Vinta, 9 Dec. 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 632.

[73] Lucinge, Débuts, 182.

[74] Cavriana to Vinta, 17 Sept. 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 624-625.

[75] Lucinge, Débuts, 231.

[76] Ibid., 259.

[77] Cavriana to Vinta, 3 Dec. 1585, Negs. Toscane, IV, 631; Lucinge, Débuts, 231.

[78] The game consists of catching a ball in a cup. L'Estoile, 388.

[79] René de Lucinge, Lettres sur la cour d'Henri III en 1586 (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1966), 224. Cited hereafter as Lucinge, Cour.

[80] Lucinge, Débuts, 196; L'Estoile, 391.

[81] Lucinge, Débuts, 252.

[82] Sutherland, 265.

[83] Cavriana to Vinta, 14 April 1586, Negs. Toscane, IV, 638-639; L'Estoile, 446.

[84] L'Estoile, 442; Lucinge, Cour, 30; Walsingham to Stafford, 19 March 1586, CSPF, XX, 431.

[85] Cavriana to Vinta, 30 Sept. 1586, Negs. Toscane, IV, 659.

[86] Lucinge, Cour, 28.

[87] Ibid., 147.

[88] Ibid., 69; L'Estoile, 444.

[89] Jensen, 88-89.

[90] Stafford to Walsingham, 19 Feb. 1586, CSPF, XX, 362-363.

[91] Lucinge, Cour, 72.

[92] Stafford to Walsingham, 24 Feb. 1586, CSPF, XX, 376; also Cavriana to Vinta, 3 March 1586, Negs. Toscane, IV, 635.

[93] L'Estoile, 448.

[94] Lucinge, Cour, 162.

[95] *Ibid*., 136; Cavriana to Vinta, 14 April 1586, Negs. Toscane, IV, 639.

[96] Cavriana to Vinta, 5 May 1586, Negs. Toscane, IV, 642.

[97] Lucinge, Cour, 123-124.

[98] Stafford to Walsingham, 29 May 1586, CSPF, XX, 638-639.

[99] Lucinge, Cour, 183.

[100] *Ibid*., 184.

[101] Cavriana to Vinta, 3 March 1586, Negs. Toscane, IV, 634; L'Estoile, 445.

[102] Jensen, 77.

[103] Great Britain, Public Record Office, *Calendar of State Papers Spanish*, III (1580-1586): Mendoza to Philip II, 11 May 1586, 574. Cited hereafter as CSPSp.

[104] *Ibid*., 575.

[105] Stafford to Walsingham, 25 April 1586, CSPF, XX, 549.

[106] Lucinge, Cour, 217, 221-222, 240.

[107] Mendoza to Philip II, 11 May 1586, CSPSp, III, 575.

[108] Henry III to Maisse, 29 August 1586, Negs. Levant, IV, 544.

[109] Henry III to Maisse, 31 Jan. 1586, Negs. Levant, IV, 455-456; Maisse to Henry III, Sept. 1586, Negs. Levant, IV, 557n; Henry III to Maisse, 11 Oct. 1586, Negs. Levant, IV, 559n.

[110] Henry III to Villeroy, August 1586, quoted in Sutherland, 269.

[111] Guise to Catherine de Medici, Sept. 1586, Croze, I, 381.

[112] Stafford to Walsingham, 14 July 1586, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1 (1586-1588), 38-39.

[113] Catherine de Medici to Montmorency, 29 Sept. 1586, Lettres, IX, 54; Catherine de Medici to Bellièvre, 18 Oct. 1586, Lettres, IX, 67.

[114] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 13 Dec. 1586, Lettres, IX, 112-113; Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 14 Dec. 1586, Lettres, IX, 115-116.

[115] Articles accordez entre la reine mère du Roy et le Roy de Navarre, 22 Dec. 1586, Lettres, IX, 418-419.

[116] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 29 Jan. 1587, Lettres, IX, 146-148.

[117] Henry III to Catherine de Medici, Jan. 1587, Lettres, IX, 430-434.

[118] Henry III to Catherine de Medici, Jan. 1587, Lettres, IX, 435-437.

[119] Henry III to Maisse, 2 and 16 Jan. 1587, Negs. Levant, IV, 574.

[120] N. n. to Maigny, 18 Dec. 1586, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 157-158.

[121] Jensen, 89.

[122] Henry III to Maisse, 2 and 16 Jan. 1587, Negs. Levant, IV, 574; Cavriana to Vinta, 5 Jan. 1587, Negs. Toscane, IV, 669.

[123] L'Estoile, 482; Edict of French king, Jan. 1587, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 180.

[124] Henry III to Maisse, 28 March 1587, Negs. Levant, IV, 586.

[125] Stafford to Burghley, 15 March 1587, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 236.

[126] Cavriana to Vinta, 12 April 1587, Negs. Toscane, IV, 686.

[127] Mendoza to Philip II, 24 Dec. 1586, CSPSp, III, 689; Stafford to Burghley, 15 March 1587, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 236.

[128] Stafford to Walsingham, 24 March 1586, CSPF, XX, 442.

[129] Palma Cayet, Petitot, 1st ser., XXXVIII, 274.

[130] *Le procez-verbal d'un nommé Nicolas Poulain, lieutenant de la prévosté de l'Isle-de-France, qui contient l'histoire de la Ligue, depuis le second janvier 1585 jusques au jour des Barricades, escheues le 12 may 1588*, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 290-294. Cited hereafter as Poulain.

[131] ". . . Che della Lega non sono, siino odiosi." Cavriana to Vinta, 12 April 1587, Negs. Toscane, IV, 686.

[132] Poulain, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 290-291.

[133] Palma Cayet, Petitot, 1st ser., XXXVIII, 320.

[134] Pasquier, 283.

[135] L'Estoile, 449, 466.

[136] Stafford to Walsingham, 3 July 1586, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 20; Lucinge, Cour, 258.

[137] L'Estoile, 467.

[138] Cavriana to Vinta, 21 June 1586, Negs. Toscane, IV, 647.

[139] Lucinge, Cour, 262, 283-284.

[140] L'Estoile, 491; also 482-483, 494-495.

[141] Palma Cayet, Petitot, 1st ser., XXXVIII, 307.

[142] Cavriana to Vinta, 8 Dec. 1586, Negs. Toscane, IV, 666; Cavriana to Vinta, 23 April 1587, Negs. Toscane, IV, 685.

[143] L'Estoile, 490.

[144] As early as November 1586, Cavriana had heard the figure of 12,000 armed men. Cavriana to Vinta, 22 Nov. 1586, Negs. Toscane, IV, 664.

[145] Registres de la Ville de Paris, quoted in Robiquet, 256n, 260n.

[146] Poulain, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 299-300.

[147] Cavriana to Vinta, 3 March 1587, Negs. Toscane, IV, 677.

[148] L'Estoile, 485.

[149] Ibid.; Poulain, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 305.

[150] Poulain, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 305-306; L'Estoile, 488; Cavriana to Vinta, 31 March 1587, Negs. Toscane, IV, 681.

[151] Poulain reported that Guise was offended by the Parisians' independence. Poulain, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 306-307.

[152] [Walsingham] to Standen, April/May 1587, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 286.

[153] Stafford to Walsingham, 3 April 1587, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 257.

[154] Henry III to Maisse, 24 April 1587, Negs. Levant, IV, 590.

[155] Henry III to Maisse, 12 and 22 May 1587, Negs. Levant, IV, 591.

[156] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 24 May 1587, Lettres, IX, 205-208.

[157] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 29-30 May 1587, Lettres, IX, 211-214; Mémoire, 29 May 1587, Lettres, IX, 453-456; Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 3 June 1587, Lettres, IX, 215-218.

[158] L'Estoile, 495-496.

[159] Villeroy to Maisse, 4 July 1587, Negs. Levant, IV, 596n.

[160] Cavriana to Vinta, 12 August 1587, Negs. Toscane, IV, 707.

[161] Del Bene to Walsingham, 4 Oct. 1587, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 373.

[162] Cavriana to Vinta, 31 August 1587, Negs. Toscane, IV, 709.

[163] Davila, 311.

[164] Maimbourg, 261.

[155] Henry III to Maisse, 12 Sept. 1587, Negs. Levant, IV, 609.

[166] Catherine de Medici to Meilleraye, 30 Sept. 1587, Lettres, IX, 243.

[167] Lavisse, VI, pt. 1, 258-260.

[168] Mariéjol estimates the force at 23,000 to 25,000. Lavisse, VI, pt. 1, 260.

[169] Stafford to Walsingham, 10 Oct. 1587, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 384.

[170] Guise's troops in mid-October have been estimated at 6,000 harquebusiers and 1,800 cavalry. Bouillé, III, 230.

[171] Pasquier, 273-274; Lavisse, VI, pt. 1, 261; Bouillé, III, 233-235.

[172] Pasquier, 274-275; Lavisse, VI, pt. 1, 261; Bouillé, III, 241-243.

[173] Catherine de Medici to Bellièvre, 29 Nov. 1587, Lettres, IX, 305; Smyth to Walsingham, 27 Nov. 1587, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 417.

[174] Articles of capitulation, 8 Dec. 1587, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 428.

[175] Henry of Navarre to Countess of Gramont, 12 Jan. 1588, Lettres missives, II, 331.

[176] L'Estoile, 508.

[177] Maisse to Henry III, Dec. 1587, Negs. Levant, IV, 631n-632n.

[178] L'Estoile, 511.

[179] Henry III to Maisse, 2 Jan. 1588, Negs. Levant, IV, 636n.

[180] Cavriana to Vinta, 4 Jan. 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 742.

[181] Maimbourg, 312-313.

[182] Davila, 333.

[183] Stafford to Walsingham, 7 Feb. 1588, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 497.

[184] Davila, 331.

[185] Aubigné, VII, 197-199; Jensen, 133-134; Robiquet, 294n-295n.

[186] Aubigné, VII, 199.

[187] Davila, 332.

[188] L'Estoile, 541-542.

[189] Ibid., 544; Advertisements from Paris, 26 Feb. 1588, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 517.

[190] Stafford to Burghley, 18 Jan. 1588, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 482; Cavriana to Vinta, 31 Jan. 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 746.

[191] Cavriana to Serguidi, 1 March 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 761-762.

[192] L'Estoile, 544.

[193] Cavriana to Serguidi, 15 Feb. 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 760.

[194] Henry III to Pisany, 19 Feb. 1588, quoted in Félix Rocquain, La France et Rome pendant les guerres de religion (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Edouard Champion, 1924), 328. Cited hereafter as Rocquain.

[195] Cavriana to Serguidi, 31 Jan. 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 745.

[196] Stafford to Burghley, 18 Jan., 1 Feb., 20 Feb. 1588, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 480-481, 487-488, 510; Stafford to Walsingham, 1 Feb. 1588, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 488-489.

[197] Stafford to Elizabeth I, 7 March 1588, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 521-523.

[198] Pisany to Henry III, 9 March 1588, quoted in Brémond d'Ars, 223n.

[199] Mendoza to Philip II, 15 March 1588, Croze, II, 321.

[200] Guise to Catherine de Medici, 4 March 1588, Lettres, IX, 336n.

[201] Cavriana to Serguidi, 1 March 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 761-762.

[202] Advertisements from France, 11 March 1588, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 535.

[203] L'Estoile, 546.

[204] Stafford to Burghley, 21 March 1588, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 541.

[205] L'Estoile, 547.

[206] Stafford to Burghley, 21 March 1588, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 541.

[207] Stafford to Walsingham, 31 March 1588, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 551.

[208] Guise to Mendoza, 31 March 1588, Croze, II, 324.

[209] Guise to Mendoza, 9 March 1588, quoted in Bouillé, III, 259.

[210] Catherine de Medici to Bellièvre, April 1588, Lettres, IX, 334.

[211] Bellièvre to Catherine de Medici, 26 April 1588, Lettres, IX, 335n.

[212] Mendoza to Philip II, 14 April 1588, Croze, II, 329-330.

[213] *Ibid.*; Poulain, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 312.

[214] Pasquier, 287; Palma Cayet, Petitot, 1st ser., XXXVIII, 351; Bouillé, III, 257-261.

[215] L'Estoile, 548.

[216] *Ibid.*, 550; Pasquier, 288.

[217] In addition to information contained in Pasquier and L'Estoile, several contemporary accounts of the Day of the Barricades were published, among which the most reliable are: *Histoire de la journée des barricades*, May 1588, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 365-410; *Amplification des particularités qui se passèrent à Paris lorsque M. de Guise s'en empara et que le Roi en sortit*, May 1588, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 351-363; *Histoire très véritable de ce qui est advenu en ceste ville de Paris, depuis le septiesme de May 1588. iusques au dernier iour de June ensuyvant audit an*, 1588, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 325-350. Cited hereafter respectively as Histoire de la journée, Amplification des particularités, and Histoire très véritable. Considerable information is also found in Marc Miron, *Relation de la mort de messieurs les Duc et Cardinal de Guise*, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XII, 109-138. Cited hereafter as Miron.

[218] Maimbourg, 340.

[219] L'Estoile, 551; Aubigné, VII, 211.

[220] Amplification des particularités, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 354; L'Estoile, 551.

[221] Miron, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XII, 115.

[222] Histoire de la journée, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 369.

[223] Maimbourg, 340-341; Davila, 338.

[224] Stafford to Walsingham, 9 May 1588, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 607.

[225] Amplification des particularités, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 353.

[226] Histoire très véritable, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 330; Pasquier, 289-290.

[227] Miron, Arch, cur., 1st ser., XII, 116.

[228] Amplifications des particularités, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 354.

[229] Pasquier, 290.

[230] Histoire de la journée, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 370.

[231] Ibid., 371.

[232] Ibid., 371-372; Histoire très véritable, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 330-331.

[233] Robiquet, 324-325.

[234] Mendoza to Philip II, 7 May 1588, Croze, II, 335.

[235] Histoire très véritable, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 335.

[236] Ibid., 334; Amplification des particularités, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 356.

[237] Histoire très véritable, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 336.

[238] Histoire de la journée, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 377.

[239] L'Estoile, 553.

[240] Pasquier, 292.

[241] L'Estoile, 553.

[242] *Ibid.*, 554; Histoire de la journée, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 382.

[243] Histoire de la journée, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 383.

[244] *Ibid.*

[245] L'Estoile, 555.

[246] *Ibid.*; Histoire de la journée, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 389.

[247] L'Estoile, 555.

[248] Amplifications des particularités, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 358-359.

[249] *Ibid.*, 357-358; L'Estoile, 556.

CHAPTER III

FINAL CONFRONTATION, MAY-DECEMBER 1588

The myth of alliance between Henry and the League was shattered by the Day of the Barricades. In a tumultuous uprising against the crown, ultra-catholic exploitation of popular unrest had forced upon French catholics an apparent choice between king and duke. Paris had preferred Guise, and the resulting breach between king and ultra-catholics was to prove irreparable.

Perhaps the suspicions and strains since 1585 would have led inevitably to some confrontation such as the Barricades, but the events of May 1588 must also be considered as "a long chain of grievous errors,"[1] as Pasquier sadly commented. To all but League apologists, the underlying responsibility for the tumult must rest with the Council of Sixteen, whose relentless campaigns had built up anti-monarchical feeling in the capital, and with Guise himself, whose arrival in the city in direct contravention of orders had precipitated the rebellion. However, the single factor that transformed an incipient revolt into a royal rout was Henry's chronic indecision. He did not dare to label Guise his enemy, fumed Palma Cayet, but instead received him at court;[2] he alarmed the citizenry by deploying guards throughout the city, criticized Pasquier, but gave his forces no clear instructions.[3] Given Henry's past hesitance to move against his opponents, it is impossible to credit League allegations of the king's malevolent intentions, yet his own actions seemed to confirm their accusations. Thanks to League indoctrination, belief and fact underwent an ironic inversion: the populace believed there was a royal plot against all good catholics, while in fact there existed an ultra-catholic conspiracy against the king. At last the threat that underlay the uneasy alliance of the past three years had been realized: the League was openly in arms against the king.

This "sudden 'horlyborlye' of the King's departure"[4] left Guise in an anomalous position, conqueror of the capital but not captor of the king's person (as Mendoza's grand design would have wished.)[5] Briefly, it seemed as if the pendulum might be poised in Henry's favour, for if ever a flagrant violation of royal authority could be used to turn general sentiment against the ultra-catholic leader, the Day of the Barricades had provided the opportunity. And, at last, the king seemed inclined to force an armed confrontation: he quickly sent instructions to his captains to join him at Chartres with their troops, and by 15 May the English ambassador reported that an estimated 800 to 900 gentlemen with over 8,000 infantry had already done so.[6]

Yet once again Henry's determination blazed only briefly, then subsided to its familiar flicker. His first official communication to the rebellious citizens occurred on 17 May in reply to a delegation from the Parlement of Paris which was characterized by a tone of apology rather than outrage.[7] Complimenting the representatives of "the leading company in my kingdom," the king reassured them that "I know if it had been in your power to regulate the things which have happened, you would have done so." Consoling himself that "I am not the first to whom such misfortunes have happened," Henry protested that he had always treated the city well and remonstrated against publicity that he had intended to place a garrison in Paris:

> I know what garrisons are for; you install them either to destroy a town or because you distrust the inhabitants. They ought not believe that I wanted to destroy a city to which I have given so many evidences of good will. . . . Even less could I enter in suspicion of those whom I loved and of whom I should have been certain, as I thought. . . .

His introduction of troops had harmed no one, he claimed, and had been necessitated by the number of non-Parisians in the city. Less angry than grieved ("marry"), the king proclaimed, "I shall always try the gentle way, and when they prepare to confess their transgression and to give me evidence of the regret that they have, I shall receive and embrace them as my subjects. . . ." Should they not respond to his merciful offer, the king promised vengeance in an oddly defensive tone:

> I want them to recognize me as their king and master; if they do not, . . . I shall make them conscious of their offence, in such a way that the mark of reprisal will remain with them forever. . . . I want it known that I have as much heart and as much courage as any of my predecessors.

Henry concluded his remarks by plaintively reiterating his devoutness, which had been openly challenged by League propagandists:

> . . . in the world there is no prince more catholic, nor who desires the eradication of heresy so much as myself; my actions and my life have shown this sufficiently to my people; I wish that it had cost me an arm and that the last heretic were in a painting in this room.

With these pious sentiments the king dispatched the generally royalist group back to Paris with orders to resume their responsibilities,[8] but their reports of the monarch's magnanimity apparently did little to soothe the populace.

In contrast, the duke of Guise made no apologies. In a letter to the king on 17 May 1588,[9] he blamed all misfortunes upon Henry's evil advisors, who had maligned the duke and estranged him from the king. Guise came to Paris only "to vindicate my actions," but his enemies close to the king,

> . . . unable to endure my presence near you, believing that in a few days you would discover the deceptions used to render me odious and little by little would place me in your favour, preferred to put all things in confusion by their pernicious advice than to endure my being near you.

According to Guise, these jealous councillors persuaded the king to introduce forces into the capital with malevolent intent, as "common consent proclaims that they hoped, after making themselves masters, further to induce you to many things, all alien to your good nature, and which I prefer to pass over in silence." Thus the duke concluded that the citizens reacted "out of legitimate fear," and that "God . . . miraculously saved your city from a very dangerous peril." Stressing his personal restraint and courage in calming the city, Guise ended with a tactful lamentation that, "your sudden departure removed from me the means to reconcile everything to your wishes (as I wanted)."

A less conciliatory epistle is difficult to imagine. Through the convenient tradition of "wicked advisors," the duke could accuse his king of plotting an unwarranted assault against Paris, from which slaughter only God and Guise had saved the city. The rigid purity of Guise's stance precluded compromise; reconciliation could only occur on the duke's terms.

And Guise moved swiftly to ensure that his position would remain one of strength. In Paris he consolidated the League's physical dominance by taking over the Bastille, Vincennes, and other strategic points.[10]

Not only did the duke meet little resistance, but he was applauded by the people when he replaced the former royal guardians with his own officers, recognized as "very zealous in the League's cause."[11]

Guise also lost no time in restoring a facade of normality to the city's government. On 18 May the Hôtel-de-Ville witnessed the assembly of a small group of Leaguers, who replaced the traditional seventy-seven _électeurs de droit_ in choosing the new _prévost des marchands_, _échevins_, and _procureur du roi_.[12] Representing the cardinal Bourbon, Guise delivered an introductory speech urging those present to fulfil their responsibilities "to the honour of God, to the service of the King, and for the maintenance and preservation of the catholic, apostolic, and Roman church, and the safety of the good catholic citizens of this city."[13] The need for new appointments had arisen, he explained disingenuously, from the departure of some officers and the inefficacy of others because they were "unwanted and hated by the masses."[14] (In fact, the former _prévost des marchands_ was currently in the Bastille.)[15] His wishes made clear, the duke withdrew, and with the added incentive of a voice vote instead of the usual secret ballot,[16] the company proceeded to elect a slate of Leaguers. The only setback in this smooth quasi-legal usurpation occurred when the individual elected as _prévost_ disqualified himself on the grounds that he was a member of Guise's domestic staff and not a native of Paris;[17] however, he was quickly replaced by La Chapelle-Marteau, a Barricader of note and "archleaguer."[18]

With characteristic thoroughness, the League's reorganization of civic government continued on to the replacement of all colonels, captains, and quarteniers who were suspected of less than ultra-catholic sympathies.[19] Although Pasquier denigrated the new appointees as generally "common tavern-keepers, innkeepers, and other such breeds,"[20] and Palma Cayet later claimed that most were "persons so unworthy of these honourable offices that even the humbler classes held them in contempt and called them captains of cod, captains of sirloin, according to the trade to which they belonged,"[21] the mood in the capital remained wildly pro-League. Prominent royalists were attacked and their homes pillaged,[22] while Guise was greeted everywhere with reverence and admiration.[23] After surveying the duke's methodical exploitation of popular enthusiasm, one observer remarked that all of Guise's preparations "lead one to believe that he wants to assure himself of this city forever."[24]

Yet Guise did not limit his activities to Paris. Immediately after the Day of the Barricades he sent letters throughout the kingdom[25] which reiterated and extended the defence he had sent to the king. Emphasizing the criminality of royal advisors, he claimed that their malice had led Henry "more to see to these suspicions [against Guise] than to continue the war against the huguenots." When the king unjustifiably reacted to Guise's entry into Paris by introducing troops, "God miraculously inspired all the people to take up arms unanimously;" once the imminent danger from royal forces had passed, the duke acted as peacemaker, "begging, imploring, threatening the people, so well that, by the grace of God, there followed no murder, massacre, pillage, nor loss of a penny nor of a drop of blood." Again, the same nefarious advisors caused the king's flight from his capital, and while he remained under their influence, Guise feared "lest they rush His Majesty into some other wicked plan." In the face of such possible iniquity, the duke's duty was obvious: "I hope . . . to save both the catholic religion and its adherents, and to extricate them from the persecution prepared by the heretics' confederates near the king." In a further communication, Guise added the practical request that good catholic town-dwellers "not lend their residences to serve as arsenals for the rash sentiments of certain individuals who would be very pleased, under the pretext of the king's service, to draw up an army within their walls."[26] In short, so long as Henry stayed in thrall to his near-chimaerical advisors, the duke took upon himself the definition of service to the king.

League control of civil bureaucracy in Paris also enabled Guise to employ the Hôtel-de-Ville as a propagandizing agent to other cities within the kingdom. Letters to Rouen, Troyes, and Sens[27] reintroduced the theme of wicked councillors, who were described as "the confederates and partners [of heretics] who by trickery and guile want to render the catholic party so feeble by their debate that in time they can arrive at our total ruin." Stressing the closeness of all cities' interests in this struggle, the Parisians warned that the wrongdoers did not direct their schemes only against the capital, but that "by whatever means possible they would like to have set fire to the four corners of the kingdom." Another letter to the local government of Lyons pointed out that their common danger still existed:

> And insomuch as he still has these very advisors near him, and that the duke of Épernon (who previously had been the chief perpetrator of all these schemes . . .) is scarcely

> arrived there, we shall have to fear lest again he induce His Majesty to some violent action against us, to the injury of religion and State. . . .[28]

Thus the only safeguard of religious and civil liberties lay in a defensive alliance with Paris, which would align itself (naturally enough) with the party of the duke of Guise.

However forceful this rhetoric, the League leader realized that it was of little value unless backed up by military might. By the last week of May his family was campaigning actively, with Aumale besieging Boulogne,[29] the cardinal Guise assuring their party of Champagne's support,[30] and Guise himself seeing to the loyalty of towns adjacent to Paris.[31] This show of determination brought results, for Paris soon heard that other centres (notably Troyes and Angers) were refusing to receive the king unless he entered their walls accompanied only by his ordinary household.[32]

In contrast, Henry failed to organize an offensive against the ultra-catholic rebels. He too sent letters defending his conduct to the governors of principal towns,[33] but his explanations seemed pallid and unconvincing compared to Guise's vigorous assertions. Troops had been called into Paris, he claimed, because "every day the hearts and wills of the inhabitants became more and more embittered and spoiled . . .; some great disorder was to hatch in the city." Wishing to avoid bloodshed, the king had acted with moderation, but the people were "instructed and inflamed by certain gentlemen, captains, or other outsiders sent by the duke of Guise." Despite Henry's attempts at pacification, this rabble-rousing had continued until "it seemed that it was no longer in anyone's power to prevent the result of greater violence. . . . Seeing which, and not wanting to use our forces against the inhabitants, . . . we resolved to leave." This impression of royal impotence was confirmed by the king's timorous conclusion:

> And we beg and exhort you . . . that the obedience that is owed us be conserved as is proper, and that the inhabitants of our city of -- not be allowed to stray from this straight path; but admonish them . . . to remain firm and steadfast in their loyalty to their king.

Obviously, this was no clarion call to battle; or, as Agrippa d'Aubigné lamented, "the humility of his style, which exuded neither greatness nor kingship, cooled off those that he wanted to inflame."[34]

Aware of the monarch's reluctance to take the field against them, the League leaders pressed their advantage. On 19 May they presented a memorandum to Catherine de Medici, who reported to her son, "I told them very frankly that I saw nothing in it that was honourable for you;"[35] nevertheless, Guise and his co-signers forwarded the Requeste au Roy[36] to Chartres. Less petition than demand, the document offered little hope of settlement unless Henry adopted League stances against heresy, against Épernon and his brother, against recent taxation, and against any penalties upon Paris.

Protesting that the ultra-catholics "have been moved by no other feeling than zeal for the honour of God and the safety of His church," they proposed the king commence dual campaigns in Guyenne and Dauphiné in order to "eradicate heresies from his kingdom"--an endeavour to which they pledged "all our means, friends, goods, fortunes." As part of this drive to re-catholicize France, Henry had to disown Épernon and his brother, who "are recognized not only by France, but generally by all Christianity as supporters and instruments of the heretics." Attributing a long list of crimes to the favourites (such as "they have offended the leading officers of your crown" and "they have stolen and put into their coffers all the finances of France"), the Leaguers required the king "to banish them from your person and from your favour, and . . . to dismiss them from all offices and governments that they hold of this kingdom, without having merited them in any way." This latter provision was necessitated by fear that the favourites might "throw themselves into the arms of the heretics and convey with them all the provinces and strongholds which are in their power into the hands of those with whom they already have such close interest." Once these miscreants were gone, Henry was to abolish all recent taxes, thus "removing all abuses which were introduced or increased by them, to the ruin of the people and to the detriment of your service."

The Leaguers also showed no less recalcitrance on the subject of Paris. While arguing that "they never had will nor intention to depart from the true obedience which subjects owe their king" and regretting that the king's departure prevented them from "showing you the reality of their good will and the evidences that they wished to give you of their obedience," the capital's new representatives followed their protestations of loyalty with stringent demands. First of all, "for reasons which they prefer to keep quiet rather than publish," Henry was to remove the current royal governor of the Ile-de-France. In addition, as the former civic officials "would not be able to keep the city in peace," the king should "find agreeable their dismissal from their responsibilities . . . and the election of others in their place;" furthermore, this control of appointments was to pass to the populace by means of regular elections. Concluding on a note prophetic of the future relationship between king and League, the Requeste asked that, on Henry's return to Paris, "it will please him neither to bring there nor within twelve leagues of its vicinity any forces other than his ordinary guards, and when raising companies for war, to keep them distant [from Paris]."

In short, Guise and his colleagues wished to make clear that any reconciliation would occur only on their terms. The ultra-catholic cause would predominate, and if he complied with their requests, they would suffer the king to join it.

While granting few specific concessions, Henry's reply[37] betrayed his desperate eagerness for a settlement. Protesting his own "very ardent and steadfast zeal" and reiterating "the care that he has always taken to defend his catholic, apostolic and Roman church and to protect all his good catholic subjects," the king agreed with League aims in that he "desires nothing more than that the princes and his other catholic subjects should all join and unite with him . . . to go together to make war upon the heretics." With no little acerbity, he regretted that up to that time intra-catholic rivalries ("jealousies and suspicions") had prevented total victory over the huguenots; however, "having done everything possible to him to curtail and put an end to the causes of these [jealousies]," he would continue this policy and would "employ his goodness and paternal mercy to this end, in order to forget the occurrences of the past few days in his city of Paris." This promise of clemency was followed by an oblique reference to Épernon, implying that the king might agree to his downfall:

> as His Majesty must render justice . . . to all his subjects, of whatever rank they be, he will make it apparent on this occasion as on all others, that he is a just and righteous prince, whose principal goal is to do neither wrong nor injury to anyone, and with that to prefer the public service of his kingdom to all other things.

As for other abuses mentioned in the Requeste, Henry argued that he had been working toward financial reform when interrupted by renewed hostilities requiring "great sums of money that he had to find and use to sustain and make war." To renew these reforms and provide for all other problems, the king promised the "usual and ancient remedy" of the Estates General, all of whose resolutions he pledged to "embrace and effect wholeheartedly, and observe inviolably." Furthermore, hinted the Response, the traditional assembly (to be held at Blois in mid-August) would offer an appropriate forum in which some guarantee of catholic succession might be promulgated:

> His Majesty will take steps to see the fear held by his catholic subjects that someday they might fall under the domination and power of the heretics, from which they have no more wish to be saved than he has desire to make the necessary provision.

As a further proof of his good faith and sincere wish to ameliorate conditions throughout the kingdom, Henry referred to the revocation of several edicts of taxation, ordered by letters patent the day before in Paris.[38]

In short, the Response served to confirm the general impression that avoiding armed conflict with the League had become Henry's sole aim.

However, the king's assumption that any pretence of peace was preferable to outright defeat on the battlefield was questioned by more bellicose royalists who opined that compromise now was tantamount to total ruin, for "to assent to the Duke of Guise's demands, was to lay down the Crown, and give it to the House of Lorain [sic]."[39] Sharing this apocalyptic view was the French ambassador to Venice, who warned Villeroy that "it is time for His Majesty to make up his mind, and, if lose he must, to die with weapon in hand . . . rather than by these mass upheavals."[40] Unsurprisingly, Elizabeth of England was no less severe. Reprimanding the French king for addressing Guise as cousin rather than traitor, as he deserved, she instructed Henry that "there is nothing more dangerous to a prince than to show himself dejected or weak-minded in a broken fortune," and she further advised him "not to apply lenatives when corrosives are more apt for the cure of the disease."[41]

However much Henry sympathized with these anti-League sentiments, an uncomfortable recognition of his own weakness prevented any attempt to implement such vigorous proposals. Among his kingdom's catholic population, no spontaneous support for the monarch had sprung up. A few sporadic defences against League encroachment were led by individual royalists who received no reinforcements from the crown; and although Henry boasted that "all the principal cities of my kingdom are resolved to recognize and obey me,"[42] most towns slid into that watchful neutrality that seemed the safest course during the vicissitudes of Henry's conflict with the League. Once more lack of military foresight and inability to formulate coherent battle plans had left the French king feeling virtually defenceless.

The effects of Henry's administrative ineptness were compounded by the split within his own camp between Épernon and the other lords. The powerful duke, who had arrived at Chartres from Normandy on 20 May, soon realized that his previously unassailable position was crumbling quickly under attacks from Leaguers and royalists alike. When Épernon counselled resistance to Guise and his followers, the king was informed by Montpensier and Longueville that although they were willing "to spend their lives and wealth in his service, . . . if [Épernon] continues in the rank and dignity that he holds, they will return to their houses, and will leave the King alone."[43] Recognizing that Henry was unlikely to withstand these pressures, the favourite attempted to stave off his ruin by resigning the admiralty and the government of Normandy, then withdrawing (upon the king's orders) to one of his many holdings.[44] Although he departed "with more grace of the King and favour of all men there than ever he had,"[45] it was becoming clear to Henry that he could not have both Épernon and peace with Guise; moreover, if he retained his mignon, the two of them would stand alone against League armies. In addition, the volatile king was annoyed at Épernon for becoming a pretext for anti-royalist sentiment.[46] The unthinkable was becoming the possible: Henry might have to sacrifice his favourite.

If catholic support appeared tepid and divided, there remained the alternative of alliance with the huguenots. Rumours of this eventually sprang up immediately after the Barricades,[47] while some outsiders untroubled by French religious labels accepted the necessity of such action.

For example, Henry's ambassador to Venice reported that the senators there "consider it almost a certainty that you will call the king of Navarre at once and will make use of his resources."[48] Again, Henry of Navarre played his usual tactful role to encourage an accord, reiterating his loyalty, castigating the Guises, and sending advice to Chartres that "in order to strengthen himself, of the two parties [the king] must join the one which will be the fairest and most beneficial to his kingdom . . .; reinforced in this way, he may bring the opposing party to reason."[49] If the French king found the vision of a League reduced to reason appealing, he made no move to use Navarre except as a hypothetical threat in attempts to win papal approval away from Guise; should the pope continue to smile on the League, warned Henry, "I shall make the most of what is left and I shall strengthen myself with all those whom I know to be appropriate."[50] Such suggested pragmatism proved mere bluff.

The same factors that had prevented a rapprochement in the past still held true. First of all, there was Henry's innate dislike of heretics which, although shrinking in comparison with his dislike for Leaguers, continued to preclude any warm embrace of the calvinists. Moreover, the king was sensitive to ultra-catholic charges that "he favoured the King of Navarre, and showed himself not so hot against heritics [sic] as he made show for."[51] In the fevered atmosphere created by League propaganda, any overt alliance with the huguenots would not only confirm popular suspicions of Henry's heretical leanings, but would seem to guarantee the horrendous eventuality of a calvinist successor. In short, it would require an individual much more audacious (or desperate) than Henry to risk this maelstrom of religious passions.

The king was left with one faint hope. Perhaps not with his master's knowledge or approval, but certainly in agreement with his sentiments, the secretary Villeroy sent a personal letter to Navarre begging him to convert[52]--a decision which would have eased the beleaguered Valois' position immeasurably. With Navarre's lack of response, Henry abandoned thoughts of an open understanding with his brother-in-law, but apparently continued to welcome less obvious forms of support, as was reported: "the King himself refused none that come to him of either of both the religions, nor spake any word unto them of their consciences, unless they ministered occasion themselves."[53] While resigning himself to negotiations with the ultra-catholics, Henry seemed ready to take whatever help he could get against the Guises.

However, the king apparently entertained no illusions that such sporadic support would enable him to meet the League on equal military grounds. Again, he saw his only salvation in peace with Guise; again, he entered negotiations from a position of weakness; again, he quickly conceded the principle but hoped to haggle over particulars; again, he appealed to his mother to effect a reconciliation priced less than total surrender.

Catherine de Medici's task proved impossible. In her son's fear to meet his enemy on the battlefield, he had also lost his alternative war of words. The _Response du Roy_ which was to sway public opinion in his favour had not even placated it: those measures which Henry had hoped would win popular support--the promise of a catholic successor, the revocation of taxes, the proffered Estates General--redounded not to his credit but to that of Guise, who was acclaimed for wringing these concessions out of the distrusted Valois.[54]

As was to be expected, the king's ultra-catholic rival also seemed unimpressed by the royal statement, despite the queen mother's vigorous campaign on its behalf. In espousing a catholic succession and war against the huguenots, Henry had met the principal criteria of League propaganda. Furthermore, although not extending a royal pardon which Guise had made clear he did not need, the king tactfully offered "wholly to forget things past, without ever speaking about or remembering them."[55] The Response had not specified the command of proposed catholic armies; however, Catherine reported to her son she had assured Guise that "you wanted to confide in him freely . . ., and also to take his advice on all occasions . . .; and that being in your army, he would be there and command there after you."[56] Actually, the king had already weakened beyond that. His chief secretary, Villeroy, had come from Henry with a signed promise to make Guise lieutenant-general of armed forces--an offer which, on his own discretion, Villeroy concealed from the duke for the moment.[57] The two major points which the king had not conceded were the status of Épernon and an acceptance of the League reorganization of Paris. Discussion of the latter was deferred until another time at Catherine's conference with Guise on 2 June; however, concerning the former the ultra-catholic leader showed himself obdurate. Arguing that no further demotion of the archmignon was necessary, as he was far from the king's presence in Provence and had resigned the admiralty and the government of Normandy, Catherine reported that "my lord Guise could not keep himself from telling me . . . that of four governments, Épernon still had another three."[58]

From this unpromising beginning the negotiations dragged on throughout the month of June. Although the king intermittently withdrew from the tension of royal responsibility into "futile entertainments"[59] at Rouen, both sides generally did not relax their amassment of forces.[60] As the haggling continued over minor points in the treaty, it became apparent that the delays did not result solely from the necessity of forwarding proposals to the king at Rouen, nor from serious disagreements over safeguards.[61] De Thou later blamed this prolongation upon Guise himself, who, "swollen by the Day of the Barricades, sought to maintain his authority and prolong the negotiations by feigned delays,"[62] while Villeroy commented bitterly upon the "people on both sides who foster the disorders and wish to live off them."[63] However, as the discussions lagged, the figure of Bernardino de Mendoza stepped more openly on the scene as the author of these delays.

The ties between Spain and the League had become generally recognized; however, during this particular crisis the sympathies of the Spanish ambassador became so overt as to occasion an official complaint from Henry III to Philip II which charged Mendoza with interfering in the domestic affairs of France by giving aid to rebellious subjects.[64] The ambassador's departure from usual diplomatic discretion must be seen within the context of Spanish foreign policy as a whole, the focus of which at that time was the launching of the Armada against England. From the Spanish point of view, a total victory by Guise's faction might have been preferable but was not essential, for as Mendoza quickly recognized;

> It is absolutely impossible for the [French] king to come to the aid of the queen of England, for as long as he does not cast himself into the arms of Mucius [that is, Guise] and his adherents, he will find them irreconciliable enemies.[65]

Moreover, prolonged chaos within France would prevent any invasion of the Low Countries during Parma's absence,[66] and would make it impossible for the beleaguered king to refuse open ports and purchase for Spanish vessels along the French coast (as Mendoza was quick to request from the queen mother).[67] In short, at the moment France's internal confusion accorded well with Spanish aims, and the actions of the Spanish ambassador did nothing to refute critics who had concluded that the timing of the Barricades and the Armada showed the "intelligence étroicte" existing between Spain and the League.[68]

Aside from Mendoza's meddling, the single factor which proved the greatest stumbling-block to a swift reconciliation between king and League was the legal status of Parisian civic officials elected after the Day of the Barricades. At the end of May the queen mother had characterized the election as "null and void as it was against [the king's] authority, held at an inappropriate time, and not with the required assembly,"[69] nor did the monarchy regard with favour later attempts by League sympathizers to win tacit approval of the new appointments from the parlement of Paris.[70] However, as the royal party was forced to accede point by point to League demands in order to prevent what was feared would be annihilation by the ultra-catholics, so, too, a compromise was arranged concerning Paris. In a formal ceremony on 15 July 1588, Catherine de Medici received the pro-League officials who, declaring that they had accepted their offices "more for the good of the king's service and the safety of the city than for any other regard or consideration," turned back their commissions to the king "now that things were more peaceful than previously;" however, they would continue their functions until they received word of the king's wishes.[71] Five days later the queen mother assembled them to inform them officially that although the king had accepted their resignations, "because of the good report which has been made to His Majesty of their persons and other considerations," he wanted them to retain their positions until mid-August of 1590, as would have been done under normal circumstances.[72] Thus, a facade of royal power was preserved which nonetheless did not disturb the League's domination of the capital.

This formula was indicative of the eventual agreement of peace, which was hammered into final shape during the second week of July, signed by the queen mother and the ultra-catholic leaders on 15 July, taken to Henry at Rouen for approval, and registered in the parlement of Paris on 21 July. This Edict of Union,[73] as it was to be known, was in many ways a repetition of the Treaty of Nemours of three years earlier; however, League domination of the king was now virtually complete. Once again it was enunciated that, vowing mutual protection, all catholics were to join their monarch in a united campaign against heresy, which would be paid for from a war fund to be created by the sale of all heretics' goods. Two catholic armies would be employed in this crusade--one in Dauphiné, commanded by the duke of Mayenne, and the other in Poitou, under the leadership of "whomever it pleases His Majesty to name." Yet the ultra-catholics had won concessions beyond these practical measures. At last the king agreed to the publication of the decrees of the Council of Trent, "without prejudice, however, to the rights and jurisdiction of the king and the liberties of the Gallican church."[74] Furthermore, Henry had been forced to violate his monarchical conscience by agreeing that succession to the throne was barred to anyone who was either a heretic or a supporter of heretics.

This near total victory of the League's quasi-religious aims did not overshadow the fact that, once again, the majority of points contained within the treaty concerned territorial awards to individual members of Guise's faction. Basically, the new agreement stated that those towns which had been granted to Leaguers as safeguards by the Treaty of Nemours were to remain in their hands for another four years beyond the two years yet remaining in the original award; in addition, a few specific positions were bestowed upon individual ultra-catholics for whom no provision had been made in the earlier treaty. Beyond these outright grants of power, the king agreed that future royal appointments in several specified towns would be made according to the League's advice. The situation in Paris was also clarified by the treaty: the new officials were accepted according to the formula outlined earlier, and former royal strongholds were returned to the king who promised to appoint as their custodians only persons "agreeable to the city."

With regard to the turmoil of the past two months, a general amnesty was announced. No reprisals would be taken for actions against the sovereign; prisoners captured since 12 May would be released without ransom; and, with the considerable exceptions of those towns granted to the League, all territory was to revert to the *status quo ante bellum*. As a minimal consolation, Henry obtained another promise that the ultracatholic signatories would withdraw from "all other unions, dealings, correspondences, leagues, and associations, both within and without the kingdom" which would prove "contrary and detrimental to the person of His Majesty, and to his state and crown.". As Guise immediately followed the publication of the pact by private assurances to Philip II of his "warmest devotion,"[75] the empty formality of this clause did nothing to counterbalance Henry's humiliation by the League.

Overwhelming as this treaty appeared, there were yet some points of agreement that were not included in the document itself. No direct mention was made of the promised Estates General, except for a reference in the edict's prologue that all declarations by the king would be honoured; however, letters patent for the assembly's convocation at Blois in mid-September were issued almost concurrently with the publication of the treaty.[76]

The matter of Épernon did not lend itself to so simple a solution. Although, again, the edict contained no clue to his future status, it was surely in accordance with some tacit agreement that shortly after the treaty was signed Henry wrote to his erstwhile favourite stripping him of all his titles but one and forbidding him the court.[77] Given the king's past reliance on his mignon, speculation quickly arose that this communication was a temporary ruse to lull League suspicions and that some plan was afoot to reconcile Épernon with Guise.[78] On the contrary, when the former favourite refused to resign his offices, the king agreed that he should be arrested ("without however injuring his person")[79] in order to recover his governments and prevent his allying with the huguenots. In the hands of local Leaguers in the city of Angoulême, the arrest turned into an ambush from which Épernon barely escaped with his life.[80] Already disenchanted with the sovereign to whom he had complained "it seems that you submit your wishes to [the Leaguers'] senseless prejudices,"[81] the infuriated Épernon repeated his refusal to return his commissions, concentrated on consolidating himself in the south,[82] and opened negotiations with Henry of Navarre.[83]

Also omitted from the Edict of Union was an official enunciation of Guise's rank within France's military hierarchy. In response to ultra-catholic demands during negotiations, the king had had prepared a preliminary offer to Guise of the authority of grand maître, then later revised this to a careful composite of the traditional powers of constable and lieutenant-general, which he personally amended three times.[84] For various reasons, this commission was not offered to the League leader until a personal interview took place at Chartres in early August.[85] Although anti-Guisards hoped the move might be a ploy on Henry's part to "make [Guise] odious"[86] and it did stir up a certain amount of resentment among other nobles who considered themselves more worthy of the honour,[87] the king himself apparently regretted the decision almost immediately and was only dissuaded from withdrawing the dignity by arguments that such action would jeopardize his hard-won peace.[88] Thus, the letters-patent naming Guise lieutenant-general, which had been issued in Chartres on 4 August, finally were published by the parlement of Paris on 26 August, creating Henry's bitter enemy commander-in-chief of all royal armies.[89]

Although the king attempted to put a good front on his forced reconciliation with the ultra-catholics by proclaiming that "it is now a matter of making war upon the heretics better than ever,"[90] few observers, if any, were deceived into sharing this unlikely optimism. The indefatigable journalist, L'Estoile, recorded a contradictory view of royal sentiments by concluding that this second Edict of July was "as much against [the king's] heart as the first, and he was seen to weep as he signed it;"[91] and the French ambassador to Venice reported bluntly that "there is rejoicing here about the concluding of peace, but there is no one who is not sorry to see the king stripped of his authority and put under their thumb."[92] Among royal advisors, the secretary Villeroy lamented that his negotiations had not been blessed by "some prosperity and success in our matters of war."[93]

Of those against whom the treaty was directed, the huguenot Navarre steeled himself to face another onslaught, declaring that League fire would only "rekindle our zeal,"[94] but the disgraced Épernon pointed out to his king with both bitterness and accuracy that "I have never betrayed you [but] those who are your closest servants today have done and still do so."[95] Even those who should have been delighted by a union of all catholics seemed dubious. The pope prayed, "May it please God that this peace last,"[96] but did not appear convinced that such would be the case; and his nuncio in France described the situation pessimistically: "The parties are not at all satisifed, some complaining about one thing, others of something else, indeed circumstances . . . are full of difficulties."[97] A cynical summation was provided by the English ambassador, assuring his superiors back home that "though there be an union made in protestation and writing, I never saw minds more disunited, nor anything more laughed at."[98]

Even the Leaguers themselves, delighted with a victory so complete that Guise acted "in reality as master,"[99] had to be mistrustful of the king's ultimate intentions. As described by Stafford, "he hath granted them so much as they grow suspicious of the willingness of it,"[100] and Bernardino de Mendoza himself apparently entertained few illusions concerning a truce made by Henry probably in bad faith.[101] This scepticism was echoed by ultra-catholics in Paris, who, despite "signs of love and reconciliation, . . . do not trust it," and hence doubled the city's guard.[102] Speculation about the motives behind royal acquiescence was shared by such observers as the Florentine agent Cavriana, who recognized the possibility of "princely deceit,"[103] and Pierre de L'Estoile, who asserted that Henry had extended his favour to the Leaguers "not because he considers them worthy and does not know all too well their aims and pretensions, but by design."[104] This theory of royal duplicity found its most enthusiastic exposition in the English ambassador's reports, all variations on the theme that "the King hath some marvellous design. . . . But yet the matter is but a-doing, and not yet done."[105]

Such conviction was explicable given Henry's own statements. As early as 19 June, he had proclaimed to an English envoy (with perhaps more bravado than truth) that:

> howsoever men judged of his actions and proceedings, in the end it should appear that not without good reason he hath proceeded as he hath, and that he will make manifest to the world that he will not put up the wrongs hath been offered, neither do anything "unworth" of the rank he holdeth.[106]

The same sentiment more subtly phrased might be inferred from a later communication in which the king expressed a hope "that this beginning of peace will lead us to some other more complete peace."[107]

Nor did Henry's actions persuade anyone that his embrace of the ultra-catholics was wholehearted. First of all, when the queen mother journeyed to the court at Mantes to lead her son back to Paris, he flatly refused to go, insisting that Guise and his followers join him at Chartres instead.[108] Despite numerous warnings from those who suspected the worst, Guise accordingly left the capital accompanied by a considerable retinue who "are gone with no stomach at all."[109] Their fears proved groundless as Henry gave the Leaguers what Guise himself described as a "welcome full of warmth and with a candid countenance;"[110] however, suspicions revived later at dinner when the king offered a jesting toast to "our good friends, the huguenots," then followed it with a salute to "our good barricaders from Paris, . . . and let's not forget them!"[111]

Continued fulsome demonstrations of royal goodwill towards the ultra-catholic leader[112] did not prevent Henry from simultaneously extending an equally warm welcome to the count of Soissons,[113] a catholic cousin of Navarre's who had fought at Coutras on the side of his huguenot family. On the king's orders, a declaration absolving Soissons from any responsibility for catholic deaths in the battle was prepared despite Guise's open opposition to a step he considered "greatly harmful to catholics . . . [for it seems] to prepare the way for the prince of Béarn."[114] When the declaration was sent to Paris for publication, it was greeted with such League-inspired abuse from people and preachers alike that it was sent back to the king;[115] however, it was eventually registered by the parlement.[116] Such an unusual show of Henry's favour naturally inspired speculation that it "was not done without end."[117]

Yet this topic was quickly overshadowed by the king's next unexpected move. With an abruptness that astonished everyone, on 8 September Henry dismissed Bellièvre, Villeroy and the other two secretaries, the chancellor, and the master of his household, replacing them with non-entities of good reputation but little stature. In one stroke the king had banished all of his closest advisors--a startling act, the explanation for which has been sought by his contemporaries and historians alike.

One immediate interpretation, unsurprisingly proffered by those of huguenot sympathies, was that the dismissals had been forced upon the king by the League.[118] However, the credibility of this version evaporates when it is realized that although Guise did not consider the ministers to be within his camp, neither did he view them as totally opposed to his party, as, indeed, the latest peace treaty bore witness. Nor were they replaced by ultra-catholics, but rather by insignificant royalists including a former servitor of the duke of Épernon.[119] Furthermore, the rumours recorded by L'Estoile that the king had acted "from his own impulse, with no other instigation" were apparently correct; far from dictating the decision, Guise was evidently not consulted.[120]

A second explanation was offered by those who feared (or hoped) that Henry was planning some action against Guise in which he did not wish the possible interference of his ministers.[121] This thought had already occurred to the English ambassador the month previously when Villeroy had taken temporary leave from court, for "some think that he knoweth some particular thing to make him retire himself."[122] Again, this hypothesis seems unlikely as it was neither confirmed by subsequent events nor justified by the situation at court. If the king were to decide upon precipitate action against Guise, he did not need the approval of those advisors before its implementation.

A third and more plausible theory suggests that the cause of the dismissals lay in the forthcoming session of the Estates General. A politician of some insight if not effectiveness, who must have foreseen that the assembly would be highly critical of his administration, Henry endeavored to forestall such criticism by essentially placing the blame for past mismanagement on the departed ministers. Pasquier concluded that the king had made the unexpected move "in order to win the good will of the deputies, guessing that they will not be upset with this new change;"[123] this view was echoed by Cheverny and supported by the papal legate's report of an interview in which Henry declared, "Besides, if I had not dismissed them, the Estates would have demanded their removal."[124] Thus, the king's action also served to protect his erstwhile servants--a result which ambassador Stafford believed had been the motive for the dismissals all along.[125] Whether or not Henry acted out of concern for his ministers, he effectively defused the deputies' attacks against the royal administration and thus against himself.[126]

A corollary to this last argument is N. M. Sutherland's interpretation that Henry wished to create the appearance that he had disgraced his ministers in order to save them and himself from the Estates, but fully intended to restore them to favour after the assembly was dissolved. This conclusion is based chiefly upon Cavriana's report of the king's note of dismissal to Villeroy, which may be translated: "I remain very pleased with your service; however, do not fail to retire to your house, where you will stay until I send for you; do not seek the reason for this letter, but obey me."[127] Although there is no reason to doubt the report's accuracy, it cannot be considered solid documentary proof, and the secondary evidence is susceptible to alternative interpretation.[128] Furthermore, the ministers were never recalled--a fact which Sutherland explains by saying that events did not give Henry a chance to carry out his original plan. On the contrary, after the dissolution of the Estates General, the king lived for another turbulent half-year during which time he attempted to rally whatever support he could, and surely would not have overlooked his experienced former servants had he really desired their assistance.[129] However, the greatest single obstacle to this theory's acceptance lies in the fact that Villeroy himself makes no mention of such a possible royal ruse in his Mémoires; indeed, he states that a communication to the king via the queen mother brought back a reply which

> took away from me all hope of expecting to receive any reward from him in the future, . . . and, more than that, gave me sufficient reason to believe that he did not remain as satisfied with my loyalty as did my conscience.[130]

This comment by Villeroy indicates a more likely if less simplistic explanation of the unexpected dismissals. Basically, for various reasons Henry was no longer pleased with his ministers. As reported by Mendoza, when the queen mother asked the reasons for his action, the king replied that:

> he had made [these changes] because the chancellor conspired with tradesmen, Bellièvre was a huguenot, Villeroy a braggart who wished to keep royal affairs to himself alone, Brulart a mere cipher, and Pinart a greedy rascal who would sell his own mother and father for money.[131]

Flippancy aside, this harsh condemnation of his long-time servants seems unbelievable unless one accepts that Henry placed the blame for his present ignominious position upon those ministers whose advice had failed to prevent his humiliation. Cavriana reported that many thought the secretaries had opposed the king's better plans by substituting less effective alternatives,[132] while Villeroy himself cited specifically the grant of the lieutenancy-general to Guise as a move which the king regretted so strongly that "he resolved to dismiss those who had given him such advice."[133] From blaming incompetence it is a small step to suspecting sabotage, and according to the papal legate, Henry's mistrust had been stimulated by the disorders of the Barricades, "when the king complained that all around him he encountered little discretion and less loyalty."[134] Repeated leaks of confidential information to the League[135] had given Henry's wariness a firmer base than mere imagination, and the dismissals occasioned a spate of reports claiming the king had found his cabinet "to look upon other favours than his,"[136] in Stafford's phrase. Again, such a conclusion does not seem totally unreasonable when one discovers that a month earlier Mendoza had assured the Spanish king of "the certainty of secretary Villeroy's devotion [to Guise]"[137]--a belief sufficiently widespread for Villeroy to devote a considerable portion of his memoirs to its refutation.[138]

Once born, Henry's suspicions must have drawn strength from an uncomfortable realization that none of his servants was his own appointment, but rather an inheritance from his mother. Cheverny and Villeroy themselves saw their closeness to Catherine de Medici as a significant element in their downfall, an opinion that Villeroy saw confirmed in the fact that the king's new officers did not respect and pay court to her as had been our practice,"[139] and the papal legate reported Henry spoke of "wanting a consort no longer."[140] Whether due to her ill health or to her son's antipathy, the queen mother was never again a significant force at court; a month later when she attempted to advise Henry concerning a proposed marriage between the Guise and Montmorency families, the king was so angry that he refused to speak to her for six days.[141]

In shedding his mother's tutelage, Henry also made clear his feeling that the ex-ministers had enjoyed too much authority. First of all, their replacements were nonentities obviously dependent on the king's favour. Besides this, past squabbles with Villeroy over the secretary's right to open dispatches[142] were not to be repeated, as the king rigidly circumscribed the duties of his new appointees to exclude their right to open or even receive letters,[143] and Henry alone opened diplomatic packets.[144]

Court gossip soon repeated his claim that he felt set at liberty by the expulsion of his domineering servants,[145] and the king's vigorous dedication to the business of governing confirmed his stated desire to be "the leader, councillor, and secretary of affairs of state."[146]

Yet this image of a disenchanted king determined to gather all reins of power into his own hands is lacking one perspective that is perhaps suggested by Henry's sudden hyperactivity: his basically unstable personality was retreating from reality under the strain of constant conflict with the League. Within the context of growing paranoia, his actions may be interpreted as a logical sequence: finding himself in an untenable situation, he disclaimed all responsibility for the events which had resulted in his humiliation; if he were not at fault, then he had been betrayed; if he were betrayed, it was by those closest to him, whom he then had to expel; having rid himself of one set of traitors, he could prevent further betrayal only by keeping all state affairs to himself. To a rational mind, external evidence could imply ministerial incompetence or lack of total dedication to the king's interests, but not absolute treachery. Similarly, the abruptness of Henry's decision and his subsequent obsessive secrecy argues a disordered personality, and more than metaphor is reflected in the king's statement that these dismissals "had taken away from about him . . . the prying Foxes [sic] eyes."[147]

In summation, the expulsion of the royal servants may be viewed as a quasi-rational response to certain stimulae, but it was a response exaggerated by Henry's growing paranoia. Given the king's general political perceptiveness, it seems probable that he recognized the advantages of such dismissals before the sitting of the Estates General; however, whether or not this rational factor acted as a catalyst to his irrational convictions is impossible to prove. Perhaps Mendoza provided the most telling analysis in his rather frustrated narration of events to his Spanish master: "The actions of this prince [Henry III] all contradict each other to such an extent that these dismissals . . . do not appear to be the result of a plan drawn up in advance."[148] Amidst these conjectures one conclusion emerges as probable: had the Barricades been followed by an aftermath more favourable to the king, the mass firings would not have occurred. In Henry's eyes, his ministers' chief sin was not faithlessness but failure.

While speculation continued as to the causes of the dismissals, attention soon turned to the forthcoming session of the Estates General at Blois. Although such observers as the papal legate foresaw only further dissension resulting from the fact that "everyone hopes to gain advantage for his own interests,"[149] Henry apparently looked to the assembly for a decided improvement in his fortunes, according to his ultra-catholic rival,[150] and sought to win deputies to his cause by personally greeting each arrival.[151] Unfortunately for Valois hopes, his strategem proved worthless in view of a prior League campaign throughout the kingdom which Guise described to Mendoza:

> For my part I neglect nothing, but have sent trustworthy men into all the provinces and bailliages in order to accomplish an opposite result; I believe that I have succeeded to such an extent that the majority of the deputies will be for us and at our command.[152]

The accuracy of this prediction was soon verified by the appearance at

Blois of delegates who were obviously of Guise's faction,[153] a preponderance which Jensen has reconstructed as 380 League supporters out of a total of 505 deputies.[154]

The anti-royalist mood of the assembly was evident long before the formal opening ceremonies. Mendoza's boast that Guise believed "the Estates would serve his policies as much as he could wish in imposing their will upon the king"[155] seemed confirmed when each order selected a recognized Leaguer as spokesman[156] and then proceeded to launch vigorous criticisms of the king's financial administration and religious policy. Angered by a delegation asking for the revocation of certain financial edicts, Henry protested that he recognized requests but not resolutions such as the group had presented, and blamed the deputies' restiveness upon malefactors "so little pleased by the tranquillity of his state that they never stop spreading false rumours;"[157] nonetheless, lengthy discussions continued among the deputies concerning desired modifications of the salt tax.[158] The religious issue found Guise more directly involved. Reporting to Mendoza that he was "well on the way" to having the Estates declare open war upon the huguenots "so that the king my master could never make any treaty or truce with them,"[159] Guise doubtless supported a move to have Henry formally renew the Edict of Union and solemn oath by the deputies. When confronted with this request, the king protested that "it called into question the firmness of his word" and that the deputies would better spend their time thinking of how to raise funds for the army; when they persisted, he again fumed that they were "mistrusting his faith and integrity" but finally capitulated, though not without a further comment that he found their request "rather peculiar."[160]

Despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, Henry apparently clung to the belief that some benefit to the royal cause could be salvaged from the convocation of the traditional assembly. To this end he continued his campaign among individual deputies, to the point that Guise reprimanded his king for enticing defections among the duke's followers--an accusation to which Henry regally replied that "although servants of the house of Guise, these gentlemen are no less vassals of the crown."[161] However, such minor skirmishes paled beside the audacity of the speech with which the king formally opened the Estates General on 16 October 1588.

Against the background of traditional pageantry which featured Guise seated at the foot of Henry's throne, the king mustered his personal reserves to deliver a long harangue "with great eloquence and majesty."[162] He began the speech unsurprisingly enough with a tribute to his mother's services, but followed this with a reminder that the estates had been convened not merely to "cure the illnesses" of the state, but also to "re-establish this great monarchy . . ., to reaffirm the sovereign's legitimate authority rather than to unsettle it or diminish it, as . . . certain ill-wishers would like you to believe." Recalling his illustrious military career against the huguenots,[163] he protested the sincerity of his catholicism and his abhorrence of heresy, then promised a widespread reform to remove abuses from both church and state, thus alleviating his people. However, this pledge of financial relief was rapidly qualified by his statement that "war cannot be waged properly without money, and since we are well on our way to eradicating this accursed heresy, large sums will be needed to succeed."

Next Henry moved to the offensive with a pointed comment that "I have not intrigued against the liberty of the deputies nor corrupted the electors; had I done so I would blush for my conduct, as those should blush who have resorted to such unworthy means." Finally, recalling that the Edict of Union had prohibited leagues and associations, he attacked the League directly: "as I am obliged like yourselves to preserve the royal authority, I declare that from this time forward . . . I shall seize, hold, and convict of high treason those of my subjects who do not give up such associations." According to Pasquier, with even greater boldness Henry claimed that he would already have wiped out all heresy had he not been hindered by the "unbounded ambition" of certain subjects.[164] In a final appeal to the shocked deputies, the king asked them to "rally around him to fight the confusion and corruption in the state," adding with a fine rhetorical flourish,

> if you do otherwise, you will imprint upon your memories a stain of everlasting dishonour; you will take away from your descendants this fine claim to hereditary allegiance towards your king which was so carefully won and left for you by your forefathers.[165]

It was a fine and kingly gesture, but only a gesture; it availed Henry nothing.

His rival listened to the surprising oration in silence, but his anger was evident by his pallor and change of countenance.[166] After the ceremony was over the League leaders held a conclave in which they decided to send the archbishop of Lyons to insist that the king delete certain offensive expressions before he permitted his speech to be printed. At first the king refused, but when the archbishop threatened that the session would disband immediately unless the Guises were satisfied in this matter, Henry's resistance crumbled. His strong phrases against the League were omitted in the published speech, and those few unedited copies which had already been printed were destroyed by the all-powerful duke.[167]

The impotence of Henry's attempt at defiance was underlined two days later, when he took part in a solemn reaffirmation of the Edict of Union. The king's reluctance had given rise to rumours that he favoured peace with the huguenots,[168] and the relentless pressure from ultra-catholic delegates succeeded in forcing him publicly to realign himself with the League's religious policy.[169] As a symbol of the state's dedication to catholicism and the Guises' success in "overcoming all the objection and obstacles that the king wanted to raise,"[170] news of the ceremony was greeted by widespread celebration.[171] Guise's first aim for the Estates General[172] was accomplished: Henry could not evade war with the heretics without damning himself as a perjuror and hypocrite in the eyes of his subjects.

The League victory at the Estates General is even more impressive in light of an unexpected development on the international scene which threatened to upset ultra-catholic plans. Early in October news was received that the duke of Savoy had invaded the marquisate of Saluzzo, the last remnant of once extensive French holdings acquired during the Italian wars of the early sixteenth century. Savoy's protestations that he had so acted in order to protect the area from the huguenots in neighbouring

Dauphiné[173] did not abate French wrath against "a petty princeling"[174] who had "vilely taken a sample our of State."[175] Those opposed to Guise's faction immediately accused him of collusion with Savoy,[176] while a movement quickly arose which advocated the uniting of all Frenchmen regardless of religion in a punitive expedition against the brash invader.[177] Guise himself raged to Mendoza about "this accident of Carmagnola [principal town of Saluzzo] which I fear will upset my intentions and plans,"[178] for he could see that "already a goodly number of our deputies are hinting at a general peace with the huguenots for the purpose of uniting with them."[179] To avert such a catastrophe which inevitably would bring "the total destruction of our holy religion," Guise urged that Philip II intervene to bring Savoy to reason.[180] The duke's problems were complicated by the fact that Henry was openly infuriated by Savoy's effrontery,[181] yet instead of exploiting his subjects' similar feelings to escape from Guise's control of policy, the king seemed immobilized by the ultra-catholic leader's manoeuvrings. The crisis lingered for several weeks, but by mid-November when the Estates General passed a vague resolution "to find some means to recover" Saluzzo,[182] the force of the anti-Savoyard movement had been defused, and Guise could report triumphantly to Mendoza that he had managed to smooth things over.[183] Eventually, Henry sent only a special envoy to Savoy, and when he recalled him a month later the king consoled himself that the futility of the mission at least had demonstrated to the world at large that he preferred the maintenance of peace between catholic states to the personal redress of "indignity and insult."[184]

Once Saluzzo had died down as an issue, the deputies returned to their twin grievances of religion and finances. To their great satisfaction, war against the huguenots had been declared by the reaffirmation of the Edict of Union, and the duke of Nevers was named commander of an army advancing into Poitou.[185] Beyond this, the estates demanded the one concession that Henry had always sought to avoid--the specific exclusion of Navarre from the succession. Once more the French king tried to prevent an outright prohibition by first praising the zeal of the estates but then suggesting that he would prefer to send a delegation to his huguenot brother-in-law in an attempt to bring him back to the true faith and "to alert him as to his duty, so that he cannot complain of being condemned without being heard."[186] This delaying tactic was given short shrift by the deputies, who also showed scant inclination to heed a remonstrance from Navarre himself[187] which asked that a council be held to reconcile the warring religions and that the League be recognized as a vehicle of Guise's ambition.[188] The estates remained adamant. On 5 November 1588 the Bourbon heir was stripped of any right to the French throne in a statement so sweeping that, as described by one huguenot, "it did not omit the slightest step in his total loss of rank."[189]

Continuing this drive to promulgate ultra-catholic policies, the deputies of the first estate indicated their determination to have the decrees of the Council of Trent published in France at last. However, in combatting this move Henry met with a greater measure of success. By pointing out that the parlements would probably block registration of such an edict on the grounds of defending the traditional liberties of the French church, Henry suggested that the matter be given further thought. Consequently, when the estates drew up their cahiers of grievances, they continued to ask that the decrees be published but added the qualification that this was to be done without prejudice to the Gallican liberties.[190]

Whatever differences the king and estates may have had over matters of religious policy were to prove minor indeed compared to the confrontation that developed in the realm of finance.[191] As Henry began pressing for funds with which to undertake the anti-calvinist crusade so earnestly desired by the assembly, he encountered a solid resistance led by deputies of the third estate but generally supported by the other two orders. Basically, the stance of the deputies was that taxes were much too high and that concomitantly there existed a colossal royal mismanagement of funds--the latter suspicion rapidly confirmed by the revelation that finances were in such disorder that no complete statement could be presented to the deputies. When it became obvious that the third estate would demand a reduction in taxes, Catherine de Medici made a final appearance in the political arena; she informed representatives of the commons that their position was illogical under the circumstances, and that if they were foolish enough to continue their demands, "the king . . . will lose his temper, and you will have wasted your time, for then His Majesty will do no such thing."[192]

The elderly queen's attempts at intimidation proved a total failure, for the very next day the three orders presented a joint request to the king for a reduction in taxation to the rates of 1576 and the establishment of a chamber of justice to regulate abuses within the financial administration. [illegible]ed these trenchant demands with the utmost courtesy, assuring [illegible] that he had summoned the Estates General in order to ease the [illegible] of his people and that he was "too kind-hearted in spirit ever to become a tyrant."[193] However, he needed funds to maintain his household and to fight the huguenot menace, and thus he could not accede to their request.

The lines of battle were drawn. Marshalling the diplomatic skills he had used too infrequently in the past, Henry set out to inveigle funds from the recalcitrant assembly. He invited the most influential members of the third estate to a private meeting at which he reassured them of his good will towards his people, promised great private economies in the future, lamented that "he felt a terrible regret for his past way of life," but pleaded that a reduction in taxes would destroy his house and his kingdom. As they had agreed upon the necessity of war, could they not see that "cutting off his resources was not encouraging him to go forward"?[194] The representatives seemed impressed by his sincerity, but showed no inclination to abate their demands. Therefore, the next day Henry tried a different tactic: he sent word to the estates that he would agree to reduce taxation to the level of 1576 as requested, but on the condition that the deputies make provision for an equivalent sum from another source. Unpersuaded by this illusory offer of compromise, the three orders voted to persist in their original demands, even threatening to withdraw if their requests were not met. Momentarily flustered, the king privately raged that their intransigeance resulted from the machinations of certain enemies.

Ironically, for once Guise was not guilty. To a certain point, it suited his aims to have the estates in conflict with the king, thus perpetuating royal powerlessness and enhancing the duke's popularity; however, once the deputies began to interfere seriously with the war effort they were jeopardizing Guise's self-proclaimed raison d'être within the French state. So seriously did the duke consider the assembly's opposition to new taxation that he held a private meeting with the deputies in which he urged them not to imperil the enforcement of the Edict of Union but to "satisfy the king so that he could wage war."[195] Doubtless to Guise's surprise, his appeal gained him nothing; the League sympathizers whose election he had sought proved less docile than expected.

In the meantime, Henry continued his campaign of humble charm and simple sincerity to win over the stubborn deputies. In an audience of 30 November with two of the most influential members of the third estate, the king reiterated his good intentions towards his subjects but pleaded outright financial distress, going so far as to claim, "he was not extravagant in the matter of clothing, for he had been wearing the same outfit for three months."[196] The following day, the third estate made a countermove by visiting the king in order to inform him at length of the great hardship existing throughout the country. Appearing moved by the recital of woes, Henry agreed to suppress certain taxes; however, it was again a fraudulent compromise, for he chose to repeal those levies that were either temporary by definition or not generally collected. A stalemate resulted. Finally, when the estates once more presented their demands for lower taxation on 3 December, the king listened patiently, again replied by mentioning his love for his people, and then declared suddenly, "I grant you your requests." The chamber erupted into cries of "Long live the king!" which were not stilled by Henry's qualification that the reduction was awarded "on the condition that you supply me with funds and assure me resources for my household and for the war, according to your promise."[197]

Apparently not seeing any snare in their king's capitulation, the deputies attended a celebratory Te Deum and then set about raising the required money. After days of discussion (during which Henry impatiently but diplomatically reminded the assembly of his pressing needs), the third estate decided to raise 120,000 écus in the form of a loan from several of their members. Of this total, the king was to receive only 30,000 écus, with the balance designated for the dukes of Nevers and Mayenne for the preparation of armies in Poitou and Dauphiné respectively. Unfortunately for Henry's hopes, as the deputies deliberated ways and means they seem to have realized they had been outmanoeuvred, and abandoning the royal loan in its embryonic stages, they returned to the attack upon administrative mismanagement as the principal cause of the crown's insolvency. Each subsequent inquiry from the king concerning the funds promised to him was greeted by a demand for the establishment of a chamber of justice to investigate all abuses existing within his financial administration. By 16 December 1588, when Henry formally summoned the third estate to demand the sums promised him, only to receive the same counterdemand, he went so far as to agree to establish the chamber on the condition that he would select its members from royal councillors recommended by the estates. Far from modifying their stand, the deputies replied that first they had to see a list of all royal councillors "in order to identify those who were suspect"[198] in the eyes of the estates.

The presumption of this demand infuriated the king. Despairing of ever receiving any satisfaction from the wilful deputies, he turned his frustration and wrath toward the individual whom he considered the root of these many evils--the duke of Guise.

Since March of 1585 Henry had lived in the shadow of the catholic hero. Every action had been taken in the context of a strong ultra-catholic presence; every policy had been formed in reaction to ultra-catholic pressures. Once this conflict had exploded into the Day of the Barricades and its consequent treaty, the king found himself ignominiously trapped by the League, his moves virtually dictated by the duke of Guise. Obviously, for Henry this situation was intolerable, for behind his seemingly endless capacity for compromise, he had never resigned himself to a state of subordination to his rival. Perhaps at times he had entertained hopes that genuine alliance with the League might be possible, but this optimism was dashed when the duke had taken each offer as an excuse for yet greater demands. Thus, from crisis to crisis, the king had evolved a pattern for survival. While offering a semblance of co-operation to save himself from imminent disaster, he schemed perpetually, if unsuccessfully, to overcome Guise's pre-eminence--by outshining him as a devout catholic, by persuading Navarre to catholicism, by hoping German mercenaries would smash the Lorrainer's forces, by convoking the Estates General to serve as an expected royalist ally against Guise. By December

1588 it had become clear that the last strategem was as futile as its predecessors. All indirect approaches exhausted, Henry decided that Guise himself had to be eliminated.

In focussing his hostility upon the catholic leader, the king did not deviate from past behaviour which had been anti-Guise rather than anti-League. His feeling that the ultra-catholic position had been perverted into an anti-royalist movement through the ambition of its leader was reinforced by his experiences at Blois, where against the background of Henry's frustrated hopes the personality of Guise stood out in bold relief. The duke's ambition and audacity seemed boundless, and the list of his offences grew ever longer and more heinous in Henry's eyes: not content with suborning the deputies into his anti-Valois web, Guise had connived in the usurpation of Saluzzo (suspected the king, albeit unjustly), and beyond that a recent dispute over the city of Orléans[199] indicated that the nominal vassal would not rest until every town in France lay under his control. When rumours reached Henry of a plot against his person,[200] the docket was complete: Guise had alienated subjects from their rightful sovereign, had eroded monarchical authority, and now might be threatening the king's very life. In contrast to the time of the Barricades, there were no strong advisors to dissuade Henry from his path or at least force him to consider the consequences of his act. The decision was reached: Guise must die.

The possibility of royal revenge had been apparent to the League from the signing of the Edict of Union in July. In fact, Guise had joined the king at Blois against the advice of several supporters,[201] arguing that he preferred to expose himself to danger "rather than let himself be suspected of weakness or faint-heartedness."[202] The warmth of the king's welcome and subsequent displays of mutual affection did nothing to allay tensions at the court, which was described by Cavriana as "full of fear and suspicion."[203] Ever mindful of what Mendoza termed "the king's treacherous conduct,"[204] Guise alerted the Spanish ambassador to several warnings he had received as to the king's intentions, but concluded, "I provide for my safety as much as I can with the help of God and the assistance of a good number of my friends."[205] When even his family began to fear for his security,[206] the League leader apparently relied not only upon his supporters' numerical superiority[207] but also upon his spy system which had penetrated very close to the king;[208] and so certain was he of his strength that he boasted, "if they begin anything, I shall finish it off and more harshly than I did at Paris."[209] With an accuracy that approached clairvoyance, Mendoza himself foresaw,

> The one real danger for [Guise] could exist only in the king's private chamber, where one must enter alone and where this prince easily could have him attacked and put to death by ten or twenty men stationed there for this purpose.[210]

While recognizing that in this situation Guise's usual protection of armed guards would be useless, the Spanish ambassador also trusted to "the close friends [Guise] has near the king" who would be certain to warn him in advance.[211] Furthermore, Mendoza simply could not believe that Henry would ever overcome his "innate timidity"[212] in order to execute such a plan. For once the king's long history of pusillanimity worked to his advantage.

Once Henry had made the momentous decision to eliminate Guise, he moved swiftly to implement it.[213] On 22 December the king announced that he would be making a brief journey the next day; therefore, he asked his council to meet at an hour earlier than usual, and ordered his special bodyguard (the Forty-Five) to be present in his chamber ready to accompany him as soon as the meeting was finished. Furthermore, late that evening he asked the captain of the guard to ensure all entrances to the royal residence at Blois were secure once the duke of Guise had entered the next morning. The stage was set for the drama that even the royalist Pasquier labelled "the most tragic tale that ever occurred in France."[214]

Despite the king's dissimulative powers, it was inevitable that some whisper of royal intrigue should reach Guise. Discrepancy in reports of the incident precludes certainty, but it is evident that in the twelve hours preceding his death the duke received at least two serious warnings, which he dismissed nonchalantly. Months of success upon success had gone to the hero's head, for when told outright of the king's sanguinary intentions, the duke scoffed, "he wouldn't dare."[215] As Mendoza had foreseen, warning had come; what he could not have predicted was that Guise would be betrayed by his own self-confidence and contempt for the king.

The morning of 23 December 1588 Henry was awakened at four, as he had asked. After checking that the Forty-Five had taken their places, he met with the most trusted members of his council to inform them of his decision and to explain his reasons. Apparently some of the council argued for less extreme measures, such as due process of law, but for once the king was adamant. Next he outlined their duties to members of the Forty-Five, eight of whom were found armed with daggers and thus were assigned the actual killing. Once everyone was in place--his advisors in the council chamber, the Forty-Five in the adjoining anteroom which surrounded the king's private chamber--Henry began to pace nervously.[216] By eight o'clock the council chamber had filled with the expected members (including the cardinal Guise and archbishop of Lyons), with the exception of the king's intended quarry. Finally, the duke himself made his appearance in the council room, spent a few moments in idle conversation, and then was summoned by a secretary to an audience with Henry in his private chamber. Once Guise had stepped into the antechamber from the council room, the door between was quickly shut, and as the duke was bending over to lift the tapestry which marked the entrance into the king's private chamber, the assassins struck. The victor of Auneau and self-proclaimed saviour of the ultra-catholics died at the foot of the king's bed without a chance to draw his sword.[217]

Guise's execution was followed by the prompt arrest of other League leaders at Blois. The cardinal Guise and archbishop of Lyons were seized in the council chamber; the king quickly incarcerated the cardinal Bourbon, the duke of Elbeuf, and Guise's mother, adolescent son, and half-brother; royal officers interrupted a morning session of the Estates General in order to arrest several of the most vituperatively anti-monarchical deputies from Paris.[218] While Henry apparently was undecided as to the fate of his many prisoners, some of his advisors argued that he ought rid himself in a more permanent manner of the cardinal Guise.

Perhaps persuaded by reports of past calumnies and threats attributed to the youngest Guise brother,[219] or perhaps recognizing that the cardinal's release would be demanded immediately by deputies of the first estate,[220] the king agreed to the death of the cardinal, who was dispatched in a fashion similar to the execution of his elder brother. On the night of 24 December 1588, the corpses of the two Leaguers were cremated and their ashes scattered over the Loire--a step taken in order to prevent the populace from treating their remains as sacred relics.[221]

For over three years, Henry had sought to maintain his sovereignty through some sort of cooperation with the ultra-catholic leader, but each concession had produced only further humiliation to the crown. At last the king had acted decisively to rid himself of his rival; however, his sudden show of force failed to win him the supremacy and tranquillity he so desired. Mistakenly personalizing all anti-monarchical feeling as originating from the hated duke alone, the king evidently expected that the removal of the League leader would cause the evaporation of the movement which he had led. In addition to underestimating the organizational strength of the ultra-catholics, Henry also failed to foresee that Guise's death (and the particularly brutal and treacherous manner in which it was effected) would elevate the duke to the status of a catholic martyr and would create widespread revulsion against the author of this heinous deed. Thus, the decisive act that might have snuffed out opposition if made at a different time and in a different way did not signal the end of Henry's conflict with the ultra-catholics, but rather precipitated his complete break with the League.

CHAPTER III: FOOTNOTES

[1] Pasquier, 300.

[2] Palma Cayet, Petitot, 1st ser., XXXVIII, 376-377.

[3] Pasquier, 299.

[4] Stafford to Walsingham, 15 May 1588, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 609.

[5] Mendoza to Philip II, 15 May 1588, Croze, II, 337.

[6] Stafford to Walsingham, 15 May 1588, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 610; Cavriana to Serguidi, 13 May 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 701.

[7] _Les Propos que le Roy a tenuz à Chartres_, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 461-465.

[8] L'Estoile, 560.

[9] Guise to Henry III, 17 May 1588, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 449-452.

[10] Cavriana to Serguidi, 13 May 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 781; Advertisements from France, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 612.

[11] L'Estoile, 557.

[12] Robiquet, 364.

[13] _Extraits des Registres et Croniques de l'Hostel-de-Ville de Paris_, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 411-412. Cited hereafter as Extraits . . . Hostel-de-Ville.

[14] _Ibid_., 412.

[15] L'Estoile, 558.

[16] Robiquet, 365.

[17] Extraits . . . Hostel-de-Ville, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 413.

[18] L'Estoile, 560.

[19] Palma Cayet, Petitot, 1st ser., XXXVIII, 359.

[20] Pasquier, 319.

[21] Palma Cayet, Petitot, 1st ser., XXXVIII, 359-360.

[22] L'Estoile, 559, 562.

[23] Cavriana to Serguidi, 13 May 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 781.

[24] Cavriana to Serguidi, 23 May 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 784.

[25] Guise to n. n., May 1588, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 452-457.

[26] _Mémoires de la Ligue_, II, 337, quoted in Robiquet, 370 n.

[27] City of Paris to cities of Rouen, Troyes, and Sens, 28 May 1588, quoted in Robiquet, 373 n - 375 n. Similar letters to Châlons, Rheims, and Montdidier were dated 30 May 1588.

[28] Extraits . . . Hostel-de-Ville, 26 May 1588, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 437.

[29] Advertisements from France, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 612.

[30] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 23 May 1588, Lettres, IX, 347-348.

[31] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 27 May 1588, Lettres, IX, 356.

[32] Cavriana to Serguidi, 23 May 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 784.

[33] _Lettre du Roy sur l'esmotion advenue à Paris_, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 443-448.

[34] Aubigné, VII, 217.

[35] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 20 May 1588, Lettres, IX, 343.

[36] Extraits . . . Hostel-de-Ville, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 422-433.

[37] *Response du Roy sur la requeste presentee à sa majesté par M. le cardinal de Bourbon*, 28 May 1588, Mornay, IV, 189-194.

[38] L'Estoile, 561; Pasquier, 303.

[39] Davila, 348.

[40] Maisse to Villeroy, mid-June 1588, Negs. Levant, IV, 671 n.

[41] "A draft of Instructions for Sir Thomas Leighton," May [O. S.] 1588, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 633.

[42] Henry III to Lancôme, 4 June 1588, Negs. Levant, IV, 673 n.

[43] Cavriana to Serguidi, 23 May 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 786. A similar report is continued in Advertisements from France, 14 June 1588, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 639.

[44] Cavriana to Serguidi, 30 May 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 788.

[45] Stafford to Walsingham, 3 June 1588, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 625.

[46] Mouton, 207-208.

[47] Stafford to Walsingham, 15 May 1588, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 625.

[48] Maisse to Henry III, 31 May 1588, Negs. Levant, IV, 669 n.

[49] *Advis de M. Duplessis parté en court par le sieur Boisseau, et depuis baillé à m. le comte de Soissons*, May 1588, Mornay, IV, 201.

[50] Henry III to Pisany, 18 May 1588, quoted in Rocquain, 338.

[51] Advertisements from Paris, 8 June 1588, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 629.

[52] Sutherland, 288.

[53] Advertisements from Paris, 8 June 1588, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 629.

[54] Pasquier, 312.

[55] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 2 June 1588, Lettres, IX, 365.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Villeroy, Petitot, 1st ser., XLIV, 56.

[58] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 2 June 1588, Lettres, IX, 365.

[59] Jacques-Auguste de Thou, Mémoires, Vol. XI of Nouvelle Collection des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France, ed. by Michaud and Poujoulat (34 vols.; Paris: Didier, Libraire-Editeur, 1854), 327. Cited hereafter as Thou.

[60] Advertisements from France, 14 June 1588, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 640.

[61] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 2 July 1588, Lettres, IX, 374.

[62] Thou, Michaud and Poujoulat, XI, 326.

[63] Villeroy to Nevers, 13 June 1588, quoted in Sutherland, 290.

[64] Henry III to Philip II, 20 May 1588, quoted in Jensen, 147-148.

[65] Mendoza to Philip II, 15 May 1588, Croze, II, 357.

[66] Jensen, 146-147, 153-155; Garrett Mattingly, The Defeat of the Spanish Armada (London: Jonathan Cape, 1959), 213.

[67] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 23 May 1588, Lettres, IX, 346.

[68] Duplessis to Buzenval, May 1588, Mornay, IV, 206.

[69] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 1 June 1588, Lettres, IX, 362.

[70] Catherine de Medici to Henry III, 2 July 1588, Lettres, IX, 374; Alfred Maury, "La commune de Paris de 1588," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XCV (1871), 149. Cited hereafter as Maury.

[71] Catherine de Medici to *prévost des marchands*, *eschevins*, and *procureur* of the city of Paris, 15 July 1588, Lettres, IX, 516; also Extraits . . . Hostel-de-Ville, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 439.

[72] Extraits . . . Hostel-de-Ville, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XI, 440.

[73] Dumont, V, 476-477.

[74] The king's agreement was not translated into action, and the decrees remained unpublished.

[75] Guise to Philip II, 24 July 1588, Croze, II, 353.

[76] Robiquet, 424.

[77] Cavriana to Serguidi, 26 July 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 799; Stafford to Walsingham, 30 July 1588, CSPF, XXII (1588), 62.

[78] Cavriana to Serguidi, 8 August 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 805; Stafford to Walsingham, 30 July 1588, CSPF, XXII, 62.

[79] Villeroy, Petitot, 1st ser., XLIV, 79.

[80] Mouton, 223-246; Aubigné, VII, 307-314; L'Estoile, 570.

[81] Épernon to Henry III, 28 July 1588, quoted in Mouton, 216.

[82] Cavriana to Serguidi, 23 August 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 812.

[83] Mornay, IV, 234; Henry of Navarre to Rochemole, 6 Sept. 1588, Lettres missives, VIII, 338: "Je ne laisse de traicter avec monsr d'Espernon. . . ."

[84] Villeroy, Petitot, 1st ser., XLIV, 68-71.

[85] *Ibid.*, 73.

[86] Stafford to Walsingham, 15 August 1588, CSPF, XXII, 107.

[87] Cavriana to Serguidi, 23 August 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 808.

[88] Villeroy, Petitot, 1st ser., XLIV, 74.

[89] L'Estoile, 569.

[90] Henry III to Pisany, 20 July 1588, quoted in Brémond d'Ars, 227.

[91] L'Estoile, 567.

[92] Maisse to Villeroy, mid-July 1588, Negs. Levant, IV, 680 n.

[93] Villeroy to Maisse, 20 July 1588, Negs. Levant, IV, 680 n.

[94] Henry of Navarre to Casimir, July 1588, Lettres missives, II, 386.

[95] Épernon to Henry III, 28 July 1588, quoted in Mouton, 216.

[96] Henri de L'Epinois, *La Ligue et les papes* (Paris: Société générale de librairie catholique, 1886), 197.

[97] *Ibid*.

[98] Stafford to Walsingham, 30 July 1588, CSPF, XXII, 62.

[99] Mendoza to Philip II, 26 June 1588, Croze, II, 346.

[100] Stafford to Walsingham, 13 July 1588, CSPF, XXII, 5.

[101] Mendoza to Philip II, 9 August 1588, Croze, II, 355-358.

[102] Cavriana to Serguidi, 26 July 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 799.

[103] Cavriana to Serguidi, 8 August 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 803.

[104] L'Estoile, 570.

[105] Stafford to Walsingham, 10 August 1588, CSPF, XXII, 90; also 99, 108, 125.

[106] Leighton, 19 June 1588, CSPF, XXI, pt. 1, 643.

[107] Henry III to Maisse, 29 August 1588, Negs. Levant, IV, 689.

[108] L'Estoile, 568.

[109] Stafford to Walsingham, 30 July 1588, CSPF, XXII, 61.

[110] Guise to Mendoza, 6 August 1588, Croze, II, 353.

[111] L'Estoile, 569.

[112] Cavriana to Serguidi, 8 August 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 803.

[113] L'Estoile, 567; Stafford to Walsingham, 30 July 1588, CSPF, XXII, 61-62.

[114] Guise to Mendoza, 5 Sept. 1588, Croze, II, 360.

[115] Cavriana to Serguidi, 28 August 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 820.

[116] Stafford to Walsingham, 2 Sept. 1588, CSPF, XXII, 153; Guise to Mendoza, 13 Oct. 1588, Croze, II, 371.

[117] Lilly to Stafford, 18 August 1588, CSPF, XXII, 126.

[118] Aubigné, VII, 304-305; Palma Cayet, Petitot, 1st ser., XXXVIII, 425.

[119] Pasquier, 330.

[120] L'Estoile, 572; Epinac to Bellièvre, 8 Sept. 1588, quoted in Sutherland, 298; Mendoza to Philip II, Croze, II, 372. Although Croze dates this letter as 24 October 1588, which Sutherland apparently accepts, internal evidence suggests a date of 24 September 1588 as more likely, as ~~is~~ accepted by Jensen.

[121] Valois, 231.

[122] Stafford to Walsingham, 19 August 1588, CSPF, XXII, 120.

[123] Pasquier, 330.

[124] L'Épinois, 214; Philippe Hurault, comte de Cheverny, Mémoires, Petitot, 1st ser., XXXVI, 116-117. Cited hereafter as Hurault.

[125] Stafford to Walsingham, 11 Sept. 1588, CSPF, XXII, 178.

[126] Hurault, Petitot, 1st ser., XXXVI, 117.

[127] Cavriana to Serguidi, 13 Sept. 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 822.

[128] For example, Sutherland argues that Henry's refusal to see any of his former ministers can be understood in the light of the notice of dismissal being obviously "a temporary expedient, [with] . . . its implicit promise of a future explanation." (Sutherland, 302). Given the king's temperament, it seems far more likely that he simply wished to avoid unpleasant confrontations with those whom he had disgraced so abruptly (and perhaps unjustly).

[129] Dickerman points out that during this interval Henry remained immune to all pleas for assistance from his former servants. Edmund Howard Dickerman, "The King's Men: The Ministers of Henry III and Henry IV, 1574-1610" (2 vols.; unpublished thesis, Brown University, 1965), I, 191-192.

[130] Villeroy, Petitot, 1st ser., XLIV, 96.

[131] Mendoza to Philip II, 24 [Sept.] 1588, Croze, II, 379.

[132] Cavriana to Serguidi, 13 Sept. 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 822.

[133] Villeroy, Petitot, 1st ser., XLIV, 96.

[134] L'Épinois, 212.

[135] Cavriana to Serguidi, 13 Sept. 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 822; Hurault, Petitot, 1st ser., XXXVI, 118.

[136] Stafford to Walsingham, 11 Sept. 1588, CSPF, XXII, 178. Also Pasquier, 330; Davila, 357; Villeroy, Petitot, 1st ser., XLIV, 96; Hurault, Petitot, 1st ser., XXXVI, 117-118; Cavriana to Serguidi, 13 Sept. 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 822.

[137] Mendoza to Philip II, 9 August 1588, Croze, II, 356. This cannot be considered proof of Villeroy's duplicity given Mendoza's capacity for optimistic exaggeration.

[138] Villeroy, Petitot, 1st ser., XLIV, 103-111.

[139] _Ibid._, 97; also Hurault, Petitot, 1st ser., XXXVI, 117-118.

[140] L'Épinois, 214.

[141] Rucellai to Usimbardi, 28 Oct. 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 875.

[142] Villeroy, Petitot, 1st ser., XLIV, 27-30, 100-103.

[143] Cavriana to Serguidi, 13 Sept. 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 822-823.

[144] Pasquier, 330.

[145] Brulart to Bellièvre, 18 Sept. 1588, quoted in Sutherland, 297.

[146] Cavriana to Serguidi, 13 Sept. 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 822.

[147] Davila, 358.

[148] Mendoza to Philip II, 24 [Sept.] 1588, Croze, II, 373.

[149] Morosini, quoted in L'Épinois, 197.

[150] Guise to Mendoza, 5 Sept. 1588, Croze, II, 359.

[151] Aubigné, VII, 315-316.

[152] Guise to Mendoza, 5 Sept. 1588, Croze, II, 360.

[153] Pasquier, 331; Cavriana to Serguidi, 24 Sept. 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 823-824.

[154] This total is broken down into 134 to 0 in the first estate, 96 to 84 in the second, and 150 to 41 in the third. Jensen, 163. Also see J. Russell Major, The Deputies to the Estates General in Renaissance France (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960).

[155] Mendoza to Philip II, 13 Oct. 1588, Croze, II, 367.

[156] Jensen, 163.

[157] Procès-verbal de l'enrollement et évocation du pays, gouvernemens, provinces, sénéchausées et bailliages du royaume de France, Recueil des pièces originales, quoted in Robiquet, 438.

[158] Robiquet, 446-448.

[159] Guise to Mendoza, 9 Oct. 1588, Croze, II, 366.

[160] Procès-verbal de l'enrollement, quoted in Robiquet, 448-449.

[161] Mendoza to Philip II, 13 Oct. 1588, Croze, II, 367.

[162] L'Estoile, 574; also Aubigné, VII, 320.

[163] That is, the battles of Jarnac and Moncontour.

[164] Pasquier, 332.

[165] Recueil des pièces originales, quoted in Robiquet, 451-453, and in Georges Picot, Histoire des Etats Généraux (4 vols.; Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1872), III, 97-102; cited hereafter as Picot. Also Jensen, 165-166; Palma Cayet, Petitot, 1st ser., XXXVIII, 435-438.

[166] L'Estoile, 574.

[167] Ibid., 574-575; Palma Cayet, Petitot, 1st ser., XXXVIII, 439-440; Pasquier, 332.

[168] Guise to Mendoza, 16 Oct. 1588, Croze, II, 371.

[169] Ibid.

[170] Guise to Mendoza, 24 Oct. 1588, Croze, II, 373.

[171] L'Estoile, 575; Rucellaï to Usimbardi, 23 Oct. 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 874; City of Paris to Henry III, 23 Oct. 1588, quoted in Robiquet, 458 n - 459 n.

[172] Guise to Mendoza, 23 Sept. 1588, Croze, II, 362; Guise to Mendoza, 9 Oct. 1588, Croze, II, 366; Guise to Mendoza, 13 Oct. 1588, Croze, II, 369-370.

[173] Cavriana to Serguidi, 13 Oct. 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 830-831.

[174] L'Estoile, 576.

[175] Pasquier, 340.

[176] L'Estoile, 576.

[177] Pasquier, 340.

[178] Guise to Mendoza, 9 Oct. 1588, Croze, II, 366.

[179] Guise to Mendoza, 13 Oct. 1588, Croze, II, 370.

[180] Ibid.

[181] L'Estoile, 576; Cavriana to Serguidi, 13 Oct. 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 831.

[182] Cavriana to Serguidi, 15 Nov. 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 835.

[183] Guise to Mendoza, 16 Nov. 1588, Croze, II, 377. Apparently, the argument used was that it was necessary first to eliminate heresy within the kingdom, and then turn attention to skirmishes on the frontiers. Palma-Cayet, Petitot, 1st ser., XXXVIII, 448.

[184] Henry III to Vignay, 18 Dec. 1588, Negs. Levant, IV, 700.

[185] Cavriana to Serguidi, 15 Nov. 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 834.

[186] Journal de Bernard, quoted in Picot, III, 107.

[187] Aubigné, VII, 381; Davila, 362.

[188] Mémoire que le roy de Navarre eust desiré estre consideré par messieurs de l'assemblée n'agueres convoquee à Blois, en l'année 1588, Mornay, IV, 141-153.

[189] Aubigné, VII, 381.

[190] Antoine Claire Thibaudeau, Histoire des Etats Généraux (3 vols.; Brussels: Wouters et Cie, 1844), II, 238-239.

[191] The following outline of financial disputes is based chiefly upon the Journal d'Etienne Bernard and the Procès-verbal du tiers from the Recueil des pièces originales et authentiques concernant les Etats généraux, quoted in Picot, II, 106-138, and in Robiquet, 459-469.

[192] Procès-verbal du tiers, 23 Nov. 1588, quoted in Picot, III, 118.

[193] Journal de Bernard, quoted in Robiquet, 462.

[194] Journal de Bernard, quoted in Picot, III, 119-121.

[195] Ibid., 125-126.

[196] Ibid., 127.

[197] Journal de Bernard, quoted in Robiquet, 465.

[198] Journal de Bernard, quoted in Picot, III, 136.

[199] Pasquier, 347-350; Cavriana to Serguidi, 22 Nov. 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 839-841.

[200] The supposed threats were used so extensively afterwards to justify Guise's death that their authenticity is difficult to determine.

[201] Stafford to Walsingham, 30 July 1588, CSPF, XXII, 61.

[202] Mendoza to Philip II, 9 August 1588, Croze, II, 356.

[203] Cavriana to Serguidi, 24 Sept. 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 823.

[204] Mendoza to Philip II, 24 Sept. 1588, Croze, II, 363.

[205] Guise to Mendoza, 23 Sept. 1588, Croze, II, 362.

[206] Cavriána to Serguidi, 13 Oct. 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 829-830.

[207] Guise to Mendoza, 5 Sept. 1588, Croze, II, 359.

[208] Guise to Mendoza, 21 Sept. 1588, Croze, II, 359.

[209] Ibid.

[210] Mendoza to Philip II, 9 August 1588, Croze, II, 356.

[211] Ibid.

[212] Mendoza to Philip II, 24 Sept. 1588, Croze, II, 364.

[213] The bibliography for Guise's death is extensive. In addition to Pasquier, 351-356, L'Estoile, 580-581, Aubigné, VII, 386-398, Miron, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XII, 111-138, Palma Cayet, Petitot, 1st ser., XXXVIII, 463-471, the following appears in Vol. XII of Arch. cur., 1st ser.: La martyre des deux frères, 57-107; Discours de ce qui est arrivé à Blois, 141-155; Information faicte par Michon et Courtin, 189-220.

[214] Pasquier, 351.

[215] In various forms, this phrase appears in the versions by L'Estoile, 580, Aubigné, VII, 386, and Miron, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XII, 129.

[216] Miron, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XII, 133.

[217] L'Estoile's report that Henry subsequently kicked the body, saying "My God, he's big! He looks even bigger dead than alive," is substantiated by no other version, and must be viewed as one of those anecdotes which does not owe its longevity to accuracy.

[218] Pasquier, 354-355; Aubigné, VII, 393.

[219] Miron, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XII, 137.

[220] L'Estoile, 581.

[221] Aubigné, VII, 398.

EPILOGUE AND CONCLUSION

With the death of the duke of Guise, Henry's relationship with the League underwent a complete transformation. No longer was there the continuous round of intimidation, negotiation, and compromise which had characterized the past three years, for any thought of cooperation was abandoned by ultra-catholics who now sought only revenge for the loss of their leader. The possibility of anti-monarchical insurrection had been implicit in the League's organization: by swearing to uphold certain values, ultra-catholics presumed that adherence to these principles took precedence over obedience owed any temporal sovereign, and only by nominal alignment with League aims had Henry retained nominal command of Guise's faction. Once he had transgressed in so grievous a fashion as at Blois, the ultra-catholics felt no restraint in unleashing an insurrection of such force that it ultimately was to sweep the catholic king into alliance with the huguenots against his co-religionists of the League.

Not foreseeing the storm that was to break after the execution of the duke, Henry's first act was to inform his mother with great pride that he was now king alone and without companions,[1] no longer "a captive and a slave" to the ultra-catholic leader.[2] Although extremely ill, the aged Catherine de Medici retained sufficient political acumen to warn her son that he would regret his rash act if he had not seen to the safety of his towns;[3] in addition, she advised that he inform the papal legate of these occurrences immediately lest the pope first hear the story from Henry's enemies.[4] It was valuable counsel which Henry did not bother to follow, and Catherine was to die on 5 January 1589 while helplessly watching the kingdom slip away from her son's control.

As had been his wont in previous crises, Henry occupied his time in writing letters which justified his conduct,[5] essentially claiming that the duke's death had been an act of self-defence on the part of the monarchy. Charging that Guise had used the pretext of religion to obscure his plans for the usurpation of the crown, Henry listed the ultra-catholic leader's many offences and reiterated his own patient attempts to work with the duke. At last Guise's ambition had grown so unmeasured, stated Henry, that he personally was in danger of "soon losing his crown and his life," and thus had to put to death the author of these many evils. As time passed, the king's version of the threat to his life gained flesh,[6] and in later memoranda he related Guise's plot to seize the king's person and lead him back to Paris, where the League leader could do as he wished with his sovereign; furthermore, Henry insisted that he had received warning of this plan from members of the ultra-catholic faction, including Guise's younger brother Mayenne. Given the younger Guise's past and future conduct vis-à-vis the monarchy, this claim seems unlikely.[7]

The version of events which Henry sent the papacy also deserves comment. Apparently foreseeing the pontiff's reaction to the execution of a prince of the church, the king sent the French ambassador at Rome careful instructions[8] to inform the pope of the duke's death but to reassure him that it was "not only licit but pious to assure the peace of the realm by the death of an individual." The letter concluded with an apologetic postscript: "I forgot to tell you that I also discharged myself of the cardinal Guise. You can make His Holiness understand that it was convenient for me to act thus. . . ." In the face of clerical ire, the king later changed his tactics, protesting that the cardinal's death represented divine justice which had fallen upon the wrongdoer "sans mon commandement."[9] Unsurprisingly, these feeble strategems failed, and valiant attempts at conciliation by the papal legate in France[10] could not prevent an increasingly serious estrangement between Henry and the pope.

Beyond these letters, Henry accomplished little. He sent a royal officer to assure Mayenne of the king's good will and to arrest him if necessary, but the sole remaining Guise brother received advance warning and escaped to Burgundy; Henry advised royal office-holders in the towns to prohibit all "leagues and associations" and to maintain order should any "ill-advised persons want to provoke something,"[11] but he sent no reinforcements to enable them to do so; he sent couriers bearing letters to the major towns, but they arrived later than League envoys who took the opportunity to begin anti-monarchical arrangements before the royalists realized a crisis had arisen.[12]

As word spread of events at Blois, reactions among ultra-catholics ranged from despair to outrage. At first Bernardino de Mendoza himself concluded that the ultra-catholics were finished ("all this fine League fire turned to smoke") and asked to be recalled to Spain;[13] however, just four days later he was proclaiming that the French king "must be filled with sadness and confusion," for the outcome of the two murders was "exactly the opposite" to what Henry had hoped to achieve.[14] The change in the ambassador's opinion arose from the combination of Henry's inertia and League strength. Paris in particular reacted to the news of Guise's death with a fury that saw its citizens swear to use "the last penny in their purses and the last drop of their blood" in order to revenge themselves upon "this tyrant, Henry of Valois."[15] However, their anger expressed itself in organizational fervour: the Council of Sixteen invited the duke of Aumale to become the city's governor, and then sat up through the night of 24 December writing letters to other cities throughout the kingdom, asking them to unite with Paris against the murderer of the catholic hero.[16] Furthermore, they appealed to Mayenne to come to Paris in order to take over the leadership of the ultra-catholics. Upon his arrival in February 1589, he helped reorganize the civic administration into a broader _conseil générale de l'union_, by whose authority he was promptly awarded the dignity of "lieutenant-general of the royal state and crown of France."[17] Within the capital, Leaguers removed the last vestige of a strong pro-royalist presence by purging the Parlement,[18] the remnants of which had to affirm the official League oath, with the added promise to oppose "those who have violated public faith . . . by the massacres and imprisonments committed in the town of Blois."[19] Ultra-catholic efforts to provoke a sustained opposition to the king were assisted by the theological faculty of the Sorbonne who on 7 January declared the people of France freed from their vows of loyalty and obedience to the king and hence able to bear arms against him.[20] Thus the aims of the League received both legal and spiritual sanction while its proponents endeavoured to translate this approval into a military reality.

Meanwhile, at Blois Henry was attempting to carry on business as usual. Upon his orders, the Estates General continued sitting as if nothing unusual had occurred, and although the deputies protested the imprisonment of several of their colleagues, otherwise the session concluded in normal fashion on 16 January 1589. The king also announced his intention to continue the war upon the huguenots as planned,[21] declaring that this extermination of heresy was "not dependent on the duke of Guise's affection nor on anything other than His Majesty's own accord and firm intention."[22] As Duplessis-Mornay shrewdly predicted to Navarre, "the king will want to show his subjects that Guise did not make him a catholic, but that he is one by himself;"[23] however, Henry was discovering that public credence in his catholicism had been destroyed by the death of the League leader. Although Pasquier had reported that for the first two or three days after the duke's execution, the king was in high spirits, "from having pulled this thorn out of his foot,"[24] by the first week of January overt rebellion in Paris and Orléans had forced him to a less optimistic stance. Arguing that he had no intention of moving against any ultra-catholics, nonetheless he resolved that "if there are some individuals so ill disposed that they cannot be restrained by the clemency which I offer them with one hand, [I shall] have the wherewithal to punish them with the other hand."[25] Once again, Henry's speech was bold, but he failed to translate his stern words into action.

In the face of royal vacillation and League organization, revolt against the crown spread rapidly from town to town. In addition to Paris, Orléans, and Amiens, characterized by Cavriana as the leaders of the allied cities,[26] what Pasquier described as "an infinity of towns" ~~were~~ joined in their rebellion by entire provinces.[27] Throughout the country anti-monarchical feeling was whipped up by fanatical preachers who heaped invective on the unhappy monarch (whom one preacher described as "a perfidious, vicious, heretical, demoniacal tyrant"),[28] and if Henry had entertained any comforting doubts as to his status in the capital, they were dispelled by the treatment accorded a royal herald, who was nearly killed by the infuriated populace.[29]

The king's response to a crisis of ever increasing magnitude was, of course, to attempt negotiation. In a rather clumsy effort to buy off the opposition yet again, Henry asked the duke of Lorraine to act as a mediator between his Guise cousins and the crown, offering an extensive list of governments to the League aristocrats;[30] however, ultra-catholic victories gave Mayenne no need to compromise, and he continued in his avowed determination to "never put off the cuirass until such time as he hath revenged his brothers' deaths."[31] Faced with this intransigeance, the king finally published a declaration condemning Mayenne and Aumale as guilty of high treason[32]--a move which naturally gave rise to speculation concerning Henry's future strategy for survival.[33]

Rumours of royal alliance with the huguenots had travelled with news of the assassinations at Blois, and, indeed, were one of the favourite ultra-catholic explanations for the deed.[34] However, as League strength grew and the king's party faltered, more dispassionate observers began to see some arrangement with Navarre, be it open or covert, as the only hope for the survival of the Valois monarchy; or, as Elizabeth of England interpreted the situation in instructions to a special envoy:

> That whereas [the French king's] realm is composed of three sorts of people, Royalists, Leaguers and Huguenots, and that the Leaguers, countenanced by the Pope, Spain and Savoy,

> are grown to that strength as, without joining the King of Navarre, and that speedily, he is like to hazard the loss of his crown, it shall be most necessary for him, leaving the point of Religion aside, to use the said King and his party against the Leaguers.[35]

Henry's analysis must have led him to a similar conclusion, and for the first time his desperation overcame his reluctance. Possibly encouraged by Navarre's tactful expression of "joy . . . to see [the king] saved from such a great enemy"[36] after Guise's death, Henry apparently entered into secret negotiations with his calvinist brother-in-law during the month of February 1589, or at least so the English ambassador surmised.[37] Although no official statement of co-operation was yet issued, by 8 March Navarre could report to a friend that the royal army was situated only two leagues from his own, but "our men of war meet and embrace rather than fight, although there is no truce or express order to do this. . . . I think that His Majesty will make use of us."[38] The probability of this alliance drove the papal legate to a long interview with the French king, after which the legate reported an unusually adamant monarch who protested:

> No one is more catholic than I am; but if the duke of Mayenne comes to cut my throat, I must defend myself; even though I were to use heretics and even Turks, . . . what prince would not do as much? For yourself, if the king of Navarre lent you a sword against an assassin, would you refuse it? . . . If I turn my forces against the king of Navarre, who will defend me against the League?[39]

Henry's show of determination perhaps reflected more his desire to wring concessions from the papacy than a commitment to a huguenot alliance, for in late March Navarre admitted, "I know that negotiations are being carried on with the League, and it seems that we are wanted only in default of others."[40] Nevertheless, Mayenne's repeated refusals to consider reconciliation with the king[41] left Henry with no alternative but co-operation with the calvinists, and on 3 April 1589 a treaty to this effect was signed.

Although nominally a mere truce, the agreement[42] essentially forged an offensive alliance between the two kings. As both agreed to cease mutual hostilities for one year, Navarre promised to serve the French king "against those who violate His Majesty's authority and trouble his state." Henry III awarded the huguenot leader a passage on the Loire, in return for which Navarre was to "march promptly with his forces . . . straight to the area where the duke of Mayenne will be, in order to oppose his efforts and plans." Any towns taken by Navarre's troops in this campaign would be placed under the control of the French king, who was to appoint governors who were acceptable to his calvinist colleague; in return for his services, Navarre was to receive one place in each _bailliage_ or _sénéchausée_ that was taken (although with certain qualifications). In no way would Navarre or his troops act to the detriment of the catholic religion, and in exchange they were given the right to public worship in areas where the army was stationed or where Navarre was in attendance.

To moderate if not avert catholic outrage at this alliance with the anti-christ, the facile pen of Navarre's best publicist, Duplessis-Mornay, soon produced a _Justification of the union of the king of Navarre to the service of Henry III_.[43] In this staunchly politique document, Leaguers were described as "usurpers of the state" while Navarre was portrayed as both a christian and a prince of the blood. Citing many historical precedents of catholic princes (such as Francis I) who had employed the services of both protestants and infidels, the author attempted to demonstrate the hypocrisy of ultra-catholic distaste for the huguenots by referring to the late duke of Guise's many attempts to enlist the aid of Navarre. In the face of ultra-catholic menace to the crown, it was only just that "a legitimate king, . . . whose honour, state and life are attacked, should accept the good will and assistance of the one closest to him." As for religious differences, they could be settled if the state were preserved, but if they were used as a pretext for animosity, they would "open the way to this state's usurpation, ruin, and utter chaos."

As was to be expected, any such justifications were ignored by Leaguers who seized news of the intended rapprochement as confirmation of their assertions that Henry III had long planned the eradication of catholicism within France, but now had only "stripped off the veil of his hypocrisy, openly declaring himself a supporter and partisan of heretics.[44] For once, such vilification seemed to matter less to Henry than the fact that he would be gaining an experienced army. On 21 April Navarre crossed the Loire at Saumur, and on 30 April the two kings met at Plessis-lès-Tours in a reunion which, as witnessed by Pasquier, infused all spectators with "an incredible joy in their souls."[45] Discounting fears of royal treachery, Navarre himself was delighted with the warmth of his reception by the sovereign,[46] who made a marked effort to welcome with great courtesy "all those who thought themselves most hated by him for having been the most passionate partisans of the king of Navarre."[47] From this promising beginning, the two kings quickly settled into an alliance that was to prove unexpectedly amicable and gratifyingly profitable.

Under Navarre's skilled yet tactful generalship, royal and protestant armies were coordinated efficiently, and a string of victories on the battlefield resulted. By July the allies turned their attention upon Paris, and one by one the outlying villages and then the suburbs fell to their forces,[48] until at the end of the month the capital stood virtually defenceless against impending invasion by an army estimated at 30,000 men.[49] Panic rose so high in the city that L'Estoile reported (albeit probably with some exaggeration), that it was dangerous to smile, because "those whose faces looked even mildly happy were taken for politiques and royalists."[50] For the French king it seemed vindication was at hand: he was about to re-enter his obstreperous capital at the head of a conquering army.

However, success was to elude Henry for one final time. While in camp at Saint-Cloud on 1 August, the king chose to receive a monk named Jacques Clément who purportedly had travelled from Paris with messages for his sovereign. When granted a private audience to communicate yet more confidential information, the monk suddenly took out a knife he had hidden in his robe and stabbed the king in the abdomen. At first the wound was not thought serious, but the following day Henry felt himself weakening. Calling together what courtiers were at camp, the king recommended Navarre to them as their new sovereign, and then died within hours.[51]

And thus ended the life of Henry III, last of the Valois kings.

Mourning was not widespread. In Paris, people spoke of divine deliverance, and soon the streets were awash in pamphlets bearing such titles as Discours aux François avec l'histoire véritable sur l'admirable accident de la mort de Henry de Valois,[52] and Le Martyre du Frère Jacques Clément, . . . contenant au vray toutes les particularitez . . . de la très heureuse entreprise à l'encontre de Henry de Valois.[53] For ultra-catholics, the assassination of Henry III was but fitting recompense for the murders at Blois, and the vilification inspired by the king was to continue even long after his death.

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If his contemporaries scorned Henry III as an "effeminate coward," a "second Nero," and a "crazed fool,"[54] history has damned him as a weakling and an incompetent, and a study of his relationship with the League cannot lead to a reversal of that verdict. Throughout the duration of his conflict with the ultra-catholics, the French king demonstrated every limitation in turn: administrative ineptness, financial mismanagement, personal lethargy, inattention to duty, and, above all, paralyzing indecision. However, he also exhibited qualities with which he is not generally credited: political insight, diplomatic skill, a commitment to the care of his subjects expressed in his antipathy to the horrors of war, and a concern for the monarchy that transcended his own person. Unfortunately for both Henry and his kingdom, at the practical level his virtues were rendered inoperative by his defects.

The irony of the reign of the last Valois is that a monarch who was a genuinely and unusually devout catholic should be opposed by a catholic association on purportedly religious grounds. There is no doubt that Henry personally desired religious uniformity within his kingdom, as was demanded by the League; however, he had a strong aversion to the ultra-catholic policy of obtaining such unanimity by force. There were, of course, sound practical reasons for this reluctance: no monarch would arm gladly a group of subjects who represented a potential insurgency, as the League had shown itself to be, and, furthermore, a king who was in perpetual financial straits could not approve an endeavor that would require great sums of money. Yet beyond these self-interested considerations, Henry seemed to possess a genuine (if convenient) belief that heresy was best combatted by peaceful means, and he argued with some truth that war had only strengthened the huguenots' sense of party and obstinacy in religion.

On the second fundamental premise of League demands, the question of the succession, Henry found himself less in sympathy with the ultra-catholics. Beyond the personal pique he suffered during discussions of this problem, the French king evidently felt so strongly about the legitimate succession that he stood by Navarre's claim to the throne much longer than could have been expected from such an irresolute individual. Of course, it can be argued that his sympathy for the Bourbon cause stemmed from a realization that any alternative likely would involve the house of Lorraine; however, this contention is weakened by the fact that there were a number of catholic Bourbons whom Henry could have favoured as successor, but he did not choose to do so. Yet his concern for legitimacy impaled him upon the horns of a dilemma which was to discomfort France for the next decade: could the French king be other than catholic? Henry thought not, and his repeated pleas to Navarre to convert appear to be born not merely of personal convenience, but reflected a belief that catholicism and the monarchy were inextricably linked.

Given such a conviction, could Henry ever have worked wholeheartedly with the League? Events were to show his preference for peace sufficiently changeable that on occasion he could rouse himself to war-mongering fervour (as was demonstrated in 1587 prior to Coutras); thus, it seems possible that he might have been swept into an enthusiasm for catholic victory on the battlefield. As for the succession, it seems unlikely that he would ever have agreed unreservedly to any tampering with the principle of legitimacy; however, he probably could have rationalized a repetition of Navarre's forced conversion of 1572. It is not beyond belief to picture a staunch alliance between king and ultra-catholics, except for one factor: the duke of Guise.

However many social and political forces had contributed to the composition of the League, until his death in December 1588 the ultra-catholic association bore the indubitable stamp of its leader. It was the force of Guise's personality that had welded aristocratic greed and municipal unrest together with genuine spiritual commitment into an organization which proclaimed itself the defender of the catholic faith; it was the drive of Guise's ambition that transformed this disparate grouping into a potent anti-monarchical force. The duke was a skilful tactician, but he was no profound political analyst. Motivated by incessant ambition, he did not seem to consider the implications of his ever more audacious acts but only to appreciate their immediate benefits to his own stature. Rather than create the impression of using his many resources in order to serve the king, the duke chose always to flaunt his triumphs as leader of the League; ironically, had he contented himself with the more subdued role of an _éminence grise_, he might have perpetuated his influence as the dominant force at the French court. But Guise was not clever enough to take the power yet leave Henry his pride, and his arrogant disregard for his sovereign's self-esteem led inevitably not only to Henry's distaste for the League but to Guise's own death.

Thus it was a peculiar conjunction of circumstances rather than any inevitable historical tide that turned France toward a settlement of the civil wars on politique rather than religious principles. Guise's ambition had inspired Henry III with an antipathy for the League, and Henry's execution of Guise had caused his total repudiation by the ultra-catholics. Isolated in the face of an unexpectedly massive insurrection against the monarchy in 1589, only because the French king could see no viable alternative to alliance with his huguenot heir did he take the significant step at last, but even then he did so with extreme reluctance. Henry's sense of the extent to which the new alignment violated his catholic conscience apparently was eased both by the military success of the joint forces and by Navarre's great tact in his new role as royal ally. In an arrangement which Henry found particularly pleasant, Navarre saw to many of the decisions that Henry always had found impossible to make, yet at the same time the calvinist maintained an attitude of marked deference to the French king, implying that all was done for the greater glory of the monarchy. Had Guise ever had the wit to conduct himself in a fashion similar to Navarre, Henry probably would have come to consider the League as the bulwark of his throne. But as events turned out, the one French king most inclined to an ultra-catholic outlook probably came to an appreciation that common interest in the preservation of the monarchy could be as effective a bond as common religion.

Thus the vicissitudes of Henry's relationship with the League and the fortunes of the War of the Three Henries which this conflict engendered arose less from political necessities than from the strengths and shortcomings of the leaders involved. Henry III's administrative weaknesses had created the atmosphere in which the League could develop; Guise's ability sufficed to organize the ultra-catholic movement but not to appreciate the most efficient manner in which its ends might be attained. Once events progressed to the point that coexistence between Henry and the League was no longer possible, it fell to Navarre to assist in salvaging the monarchy that he eventually would inherit. Had Henry III lived only a few months more it is not unlikely that with Navarre's assistance he would have overpowered the League, and that a continued coalition between the catholic king and his calvinist heir could have saved France from a further decade of internecine strife. As it was, Henry III died a failure; momentarily, the League had won.

EPILOGUE AND CONCLUSION: FOOTNOTES

[1] Aubigné, VII, 396; Valois, 270.

[2] Cavriana to Serguidi, 24 December 1588, Negs. Toscane, IV, 843.

[3] Aubigné, VII, 396; Valois, 270.

[4] Aubigné, VII, 396; Palma Cayet, Petitot, 1st ser., XXXVIII, 472; Discours de ce qui est arrivé à Blois, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XII, 152.

[5] Instruction to Vignay, 24 December 1588, Negs. Levant, IV, 701 n-703 n; Henry III to Roussat, 24 December 1588, Correspondance politique et militaire de Henri le Grand (Paris: Chez Petit, 1866), 7. Cited hereafter as Correspondance politique.

[6] Mémoire, February 1589, Negs. Levant, IV, 711 n - 713 n.

[7] Mendoza reported that on the day of the duke's death, the king had one of his advisors state to the council that Mayenne had asked him to warn the king of Guise's intentions, but an apparent gap in the document leaves Mendoza's reaction to the scene unknown (Mendoza to Philip II, 27 December 1588, Croze, II, 386). In a letter written in early January of 1589, Estienne Pasquier repeats a rumour (which he cannot confirm or deny) that Mayenne told someone who was planning to come to court that he thought the king would not be found at Blois, as his brother Guise planned to lead him to Paris (Pasquier, 367). It seems possible that this version more clearly approximates Mayenne's role in an incident which Henry chose to reinterpret to his own advantage.

[8] Henry III to Pisany, 24 December 1588, quoted in Rocquain, 362.

[9] Henry III to Bernard de Montgaillard, 5 June 1589, cited in full by Edouard Frémy, "La Médiation de l'Abbé de Feuillants entre la Ligue et Henri III, 1588-1589," Revue d'histoire diplomatique, VI (1892), 470.

[10] Morosini to n. n., January 1589, Negs. Toscane, IV, 869-871.

[11] Correspondance politique, 7.

[12] Palma Cayet, Petitot, 1st ser., XXVIII, 477.

[13] Mendoza to Philip II, 27 December 1588, Croze, II, 381-384.

[14] Mendoza to Philip II, 31 December 1588, Croze, II, 389.

[15] L'Estoile, 583.

[16] Maury, 152.

[17] _Ibid_., 155-156.

[18] L'Estoile, 606-608.

[19] _Le serment de la Saincte Union_, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XII, 328.

[20] _Responsum facultatis theologicae parsiensis_, 1589, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XII, 353.

[21] Cavriana to Serguidi, 16 January 1589, Negs. Toscane, IV, 858.

[22] Instruction to Vignay, 24 December 1588, Negs. Levant, IV, 702 n.

[23] Duplessis to Navarre, 26 December 1588, Mornay, IV, 278.

[24] Pasquier, 375.

[25] Henry III to Vignay, 4 January 1589, Negs. Levant, IV, 704.

[26] Cavriana to Serguidi, 16 January 1589, Negs. Toscane, IV, 856.

[27] Pasquier, 397. Of towns, he lists Abbeville, Laon, Soissons, Péronne, Troyes, Rouen, Nantes, Bourges, Le Mans, Lyons, Meaux, Chartres, Sens, Auxerre, Melun, Mante, and "several others." Among provinces, he lists Normandy, Brittany, Picardy, Champagne. Further details of each town's status may be found in _Coppie des mémoires secrets en forme de Missive_, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XII, 237-240.

[28] Cavriana to Serguidi, 16 January 1589, Negs. Toscane, IV, 856.

[29] L'Estoile, 610.

[30] Rocquain, 380-381.

[31] Lyly to Stafford, 7 February 1589, CSPF, XXIII (1589), 72-74.

[32] Stafford to Walsingham, 16 February 1589, CSPF, XXIII, 96.

[33] Duplessis to Reaux, 20 February 1589, Mornay, IV, 319-320.

[34] Le Martyre des deux frères, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XII, 64.

[35] The Heads of Mr. Wotton's Instructions, 14 February 1589, CSPF, XXIII, 91.

[36] Duplessis to Henry of Navarre, 26 December 1588, Mornay, IV, 278.

[37] Stafford to Walsingham, 15 February 1589, CSPF, XXIII, 94.

[38] Henry of Navarre to Countess of Gramont, 8 March 1589, Lettres missives, II, 460.

[39] Morosini to Montalto, 15 March 1589, quoted in Rocquain, 379-380.

[40] Henry of Navarre to Duplessis, 23 March 1589, Lettres missives, II, 465-466.

[41] Morosini reported that during his attempted negotiations with Mayenne the duke referred to Henry most frequently as "ce misérable." Morosini to Montalto, 21 April 1589, quoted in Rocquain, 382.

[42] Articles du traicté de la trefve negotiée par M. du Plessis, de la part du roi de Navarre, avec le Roi Henry III, Lettres missives, II, 471 n - 473 n.

[43] April 1589, Mornay, IV, 372-379.

[44] L'Estoile, 625.

[45] Pasquier, 423.

[46] Henry of Navarre to Duplessis, 30 April 1589, Lettres missives, II, 477-480.

[47] Aubigné, IX, 77.

[48] L'Estoile, 629-641.

[49] Lavisse, VI, pt. 1, 298.

[50] L'Estoile, 629.

[51] Certificat de plusieurs seigneurs de qualité qui assistèrent le roy depuis qu'il fut blessé jusques à sa mort, Arch. cur., 1st ser., 371-376; L'Estoile, 643-645; Pasquier, 431-434.

[52] Arch. cur., 1st ser., XII, 361-369.

[53] Arch. cur., 1st ser., XII, 397-414.

[54] Le Martyre des deux frères, Arch. cur., 1st ser., XII, 90, 95.

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